

Eur päisches Pat ntamt
Europ an Pat nt Offi e
Offic uropé n des brevets



(11) **EP 0 787 167 B1**

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

(45) Date of publication and mention
of the grant of the patent:
21.05.2003 Bulletin 2003/21

(21) Application number: **95937338.2**

(22) Date of filing: **04.10.1995**

(51) Int Cl.7: **C08L 23/04, C08J 5/18**

(86) International application number:
PCT/US95/12773

(87) International publication number:
WO 96/012762 (02.05.1996 Gazette 1996/20)

(54) **POLYOLEFIN COMPOSITIONS EXHIBITING HEAT RESISTIVITY, LOW HEXANE-EXTRACTIVES
AND CONTROLLED MODULUS**

POLYOLEFINZUSAMMENSETZUNGEN MIT WÄRMEWIDERSTÄNDIGEM, REDUZIERTEM
GEHALT AN HEXAN, EXTRAKTIONSFÄHIGEN STOFFEN UND KONTROLLIERTES MODUL

COMPOSITIONS DE POLYOLEFINES A FORTE RESISTANCE A LA CHALEUR, FAIBLE
DEGAGEMENT D'HEXANE ET MODULE D'ELASTICITE CONTROLABLE

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH DE ES FR GB IT LI NL SE

(30) Priority: **21.10.1994 US 327156**

(43) Date of publication of application:
06.08.1997 Bulletin 1997/32

(73) Proprietor: **Dow Global Technologies Inc.**
Midland, Michigan 48674 (US)

(72) Inventors:
• **DEGROOT, Jacquelyn, A.**
Lake Jackson, TX 77566 (US)
• **HAZLITT, Lonnie, G.**
Lake Jackson, TX 77566 (US)
• **JAIN, Pradeep**
Lake Jackson, TX 77566 (US)

- **KARANDE, Seema, V.**
Missouri City, TX 77459 (US)
- **MERGENHAGEN, Laura, K.**
Lake Jackson, TX 77566 (US)
- **MOLDOVAN, Dan, G.**
Danbury, TX 77534 (US)
- **STEWART, Kenneth, B.**
Lake Jackson, TX 77566 (US)
- **WHITEMAN, Nicole, F.**
Lake Jackson, TX 77566 (US)

(74) Representative:
Smulders, Theodorus A.H.J., Jr. et al
Vereenigde
Postbus 87930
2508 DH Den Haag (NL)

(56) References cited:
US-A- 4 429 079

EP 0 787 167 B1

Note: Within nine months from the publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent, any person may give notice to the European Patent Office of opposition to the European patent granted. Notice of opposition shall be filed in a written reasoned statement. It shall not be deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid. (Art. 99(1) European Patent Convention).

Description

[0001] This invention pertains to a polyolefin composition comprising at least two polymer material components. In particular embodiments of this invention, such a composition, or a film, coating or molding fabricated from such a composition, will be characterized as having a high heat resistivity, high percent residual crystallinity, low level of hexane extractives, low heat seal and hot tack initiation temperatures, high hot tack strength and controlled modulus.

[0002] Although polyolefin resins have long found utility in food packaging and food storage container applications, a polyolefin resin with the desired balance of properties in the form of a film, coating and molding has not been available to fabricators and packagers. An optimum polyolefin resin for packaging and storage applications would possess a number of key performance properties. In particular, an optimum resin would be characterized by a high percent residual crystallinity and/or high Vicat softening point (indicating high heat resistivity which is important, for example, for microwaveable food container and in hot-fill film packaging applications); a controllably high or low modulus (indicating good dimensional stability which is important for efficient product loading and bag-making operations or indicating good openability of refrigerated food containers, respectively); a low heat seal and hot tack temperature (indicating the ability to readily convert films and coatings into packages); high tear, dart impact resistance and puncture resistance (indicating greater package or container integrity under abuse); and a low level of hexane extractives (indicating a lower tendency for low molecular weight impurities or polymer fractions to migrate into sensitive packaged goods such as foodstuffs in food contact applications).

[0003] Traditionally, enhancement of one particular resin property has required some sacrifice with respect to another important resin property. For instance, low modulus, low heat seal and hot tack initiation temperatures, high tear strength, high dart impact resistance and high puncture resistance are typically achieved by increasing the comonomer content of the resin. In contrast, high crystallinity, high Vicat softening points, high modulus and low levels of n-hexane extractives are typically achieved by decreasing the comonomer content of the resin. Accordingly, improving the resin with respect to one class of properties has been historically achieved to the detriment of other properties.

[0004] One particular problem which has confronted industry is that the Vicat softening point of a resin and the heat seal initiation or hot tack initiation temperatures of a film layer fabricated from such a resin have been historically viewed as directly related. That is, while preferred resins will have a high Vicat softening point to promote heat resistivity, such improved heat resistivity traditionally comes at the cost of increased heat seal initiation and hot tack temperatures, which imposes decreased packaging line speeds and increased energy costs upon the package fabricator. Also, conventional resins typically have heat seal and hot tack initiation temperatures that either approximate their respective Vicat softening points or, more undesirably, are higher than their respective Vicat softening points. Thus, it is presently desirable to maximize the difference between the Vicat softening point of a resin and the heat seal and/or hot tack initiation temperature of a film layer fabricated from that resin as well as to provide polymer compositions that are characterized as having initiation temperatures more than 6°C lower than their respective Vicat softening points such that packages having high heat resistivity and high ultimate hot strength may be more economically prepared.

[0005] Another particular problem which has confronted industry is that while ethylene alpha-olefin polymers having a higher comonomer content, (that is, a density less than about 0.900 g/cc) yield films and coatings that exhibit good performance in terms of low heat seal and hot tack initiation temperatures, tear strength, dart impact resistance and puncture resistance, such polymers either exhibit excessive n-hexane extractives or are substantially soluble in n-hexane. In contrast to simple extraction, which pertains to the solubilizing of low molecular weight impurities, polymer fractions or degradation products which represent only small portions of the total polymer, substantially complete solubility in n-hexane is attributable to higher degrees of polymer amorphosity, that is, a lower degree of crystallinity characteristic of interpolymers having a higher comonomer content.

[0006] Hexane-soluble materials and materials with high n-hexane extractives levels generally are not acceptable for use in direct food contact applications, such as sealant layers in multilayer film packages or injection molded food storage containers. Even where these materials are used for food packaging and storage in general, or for packaging and storing taste and odor sensitive goods, a substantial barrier material (such as, for example, aluminum foil) must be used between the material and the packaged or stored item. Accordingly, industry has historically been limited with respect to the utilization of lower density ethylene alpha-olefin resins having excellent heat seal and hot tack initiation performance and abuse properties in food contact applications as well as other applications involving taste or odor sensitive goods. Thus, it is also desirable to provide an ethylene alpha-olefin polymer composition having the beneficial performance attributes of ethylene alpha-olefin resins having densities less than 0.900 g/cc (for example, attributes which indicate their utility as films and coatings having improved abuse properties and lower heat seal and hot tack initiation temperatures), but which are characterized by reduced levels of hexane extractives, making such polymer compositions suitable for use in food contact applications.

[0007] Still another problem that has plagued the plastic industry is the unavailability of optimum molding compositions for fabricating improved lids for freezer-to-microwave food containers. Such compositions should have good flexibility (that is, a lower flexural modulus) to insure easy openability while the container is still at freezer or refrigerator

temperatures, yet such compositions should also have good heat resistance to prevent undo melting, softening or distortion of lids when the container and foodstuff is microwaved. Easy lid openability and removal is particularly important for consumers with weak or weakened hand muscles and coordination. Thus, it is also desirable to provide ethylene alpha-olefin molding compositions with improved heat resistance while maintaining a lower flexural modulus.

[0008] U.S. Patent No. 4,429,079 to Shibata, et al., discloses an ethylene/alpha-olefin copolymer blend composition comprising a mixture of (A) 95-40 weight percent of a random copolymer of ethylene and an alpha-olefin having 5 to 10 carbon atoms which has a melt index of 0.1 to 20 g/10 min., a density of 0.910 to 0.940 g/cc, a crystallinity by X-rays of 40 to 70 percent, a melting point of 115 to 130°C, and an ethylene content of 94 to 99.5 mol percent; and (B) 5 to 60 percent by weight of a random copolymer of ethylene and an alpha-olefin having 3 to 10 carbon atoms which has a melt index of 0.1 to 50 g/10 min., a density of 0.870 to 0.900 g/cc, a crystallinity by X-rays of 5 to 40 percent, a melting point of 40 to 100°C and an ethylene content of 85 to 95 mol percent. The (A) component polymer is said to be produced by a titanium catalyst system and the (B) component polymer is said to be produced by a vanadium catalyst. Both of these catalyst systems are known as Ziegler type catalysts which produce linear ethylene alpha-olefin polymers. That is, the polymer will have a linear molecular backbone without any long chain branching. Further, the (A) component polymer will also have a heterogeneously branched short chain distribution, while the (B) component polymer will have a homogeneously branched short chain distribution. The film fabricated from the Shibata et al. composition allegedly has good low-temperature heat sealability, heat seal strength, pin hole resistance, transparency and impact strength, making such film suitable for premium packaging applications. However, Shibata et al. do not disclose films with high ultimate hot tack strengths (that is, values ≥ 2.56 N/cm) and analysis of the data disclosed in the Examples provided by Shibata et al. reveals the properties of such film, particularly heat sealability, are additive and vary linearly with respect to the densities of blended component polymers.

[0009] U.S. Patent 4,981,760 to Naito et al. discloses a polyethylene mixture having a density of from 0.900 to 0.930 g/cc and melt flow rate of from 0.1 to 100 g/10 in., which comprises (I) from 60 to 99 parts by weight of an ethylene-alpha-olefin random copolymer comprising ethylene and an alpha-olefin having from 4 to 10 carbon atoms, the copolymer having an alpha-olefin content of from 2.0 to 10 mol percent and a density of from 0.895 to 0.915 g/cc, the programmed-temperature thermogram of said copolymer as determined with a differential scanning calorimeter after being completely melted and then gradually cooled showing an endothermic peak in a range of from 75° to 100°C, with the ratio of an endotherm at said peak to the total endotherm being at least 0.8, and (II) from 1 to 40 parts by weight of high-density polyethylene having a density of at least 0.945 g/cc, the programmed-temperature thermogram of said high-density polyethylene as determined with a differential scanning calorimeter after being completely melted and allowed to cool showing an endothermic peak at 125°C, or higher, wherein the sum of (I) and (II) amounts to 100 parts by weight. The component polymer (I) is said to be manufactured using a vanadium catalyst and the film allegedly has improved heat sealability and hot tack. Naito et al. do not disclose that the mixture is useful for fabricating molded articles, and in particular, do not disclose that the mixture has high heat resistivity while simultaneously having good flexibility. Nor do Naito et al. disclose fabricated film comprising a component polymer (II) with a density less than 0.945 g/cc. Moreover, where Naito et al. do describe a film having a lower heat seal or hot tack initiation temperature, such film is only obtained when the lower density component polymer (I) concentration is high (that is, ≥ 85 parts) which is conventionally expected to result in lower Vicat softening points and reduced heat resistivity.

[0010] U.S. Patent No. 5,206,075 to Hodgson et al. discloses a multilayer heat sealable film comprising a base layer and a heat sealable layer superimposed on one or both sides of the base layer. As the base layer, Hodgson discloses a blend of: (a) an olefin polymer having a density greater than 0.915 g/cc; and (b) a copolymer of ethylene and a C₃-C₂₀ alpha-monoolefin, with the copolymer (b) having a density of from 0.88 to 0.915 g/cc, a melt index of from 0.5 to 7.5 dg/min, a molecular weight distribution of no greater than about 3.5, and a composition distribution breadth index greater than about 70 percent. As the heat sealable layer, Hodgson discloses a layer comprising a copolymer as defined in (b) with respect to the base layer. Hodgson does not disclose the use of a blend, such as that employed in the base layer (a), as a suitable sealing layer and the preferred olefin polymer for component (a) of the base layer is a copolymer of propylene with about 1-10 mole percent ethylene.

[0011] The compositions disclosed by Shibata et al., Naito et al. and Hodgson et al. are disadvantageous in that they are not optimally designed for premium food packaging and storage container applications. In particular, there is a need for polymer compositions characterized by a Vicat softening point which is greater than the heat seal initiation temperature and/or hot tack initiation temperature of a thin film (that is, a film having a thickness in the range of 0.25 to 3 mils (0.006 to 0.076 mm)) fabricated from the resin, to allow higher packaging line speeds without sacrificing the heat resistivity required for such applications as, for example, cook-in and hot fill packaging. There is also a need for polymer compositions which have low levels of n-hexane extractives, that is, less than 15 weight percent, preferably less than 10 weight percent, more preferably less than 6 weight percent, most preferably less than 3 weight percent, as such compositions would be useful in direct food contact applications. Those in industry would further find great advantage in polymer compositions which have the above properties, as well as a controllably high modulus (indicating good dimensional stability and enabling high line speeds in vertical form, fill and seal applications) and high dart impact,

tear resistance, and puncture resistance (leading to strong films and coatings, particularly useful in packaging articles containing sharp objects, such as bones found in primal and subprimal cuts of meat). There is also a need for polymer compositions that show a controllably low modulus and high heat resistance as molded articles as such, for instance, easy open freezer-to-microwave food container lids.

[0012] Accordingly, the subject invention provides a polymer mixture comprising:

(A) from 15 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the mixture, of at least one first ethylene polymer which is a substantially linear ethylene polymer having 0.01 to 3 long chain branches /1000 carbons, and having a density in the range of 0.850 to 0.920 g/cc, wherein the substantially linear ethylene polymer is further characterized as having

- i. a melt flow ratio, $I_{10}/I_2 \geq 5.63$,
- ii. a molecular weight distribution, M_w/M_n , as determined by gel permeation chromatography and defined by the equation: $(M_w/M_n) \leq (I_{10}/I_2) - 4.63$,
- iii. a gas extrusion rheology such that the critical shear rate at onset of surface melt fracture for the substantially linear ethylene polymer is at least 50 percent greater than the critical shear rate at the onset of surface melt fracture for a linear ethylene polymer, wherein the substantially linear ethylene polymer and the linear ethylene polymer comprise the same comonomer or comonomers, the linear ethylene polymer has an I_2 , M_w/M_n and density within ten percent of the substantially linear ethylene polymer and wherein the respective critical shear rates of the substantially linear ethylene polymer and the linear ethylene polymer are measured at the same melt temperature using a gas extrusion rheometer, and
- iv. a single differential scanning calorimetry, DSC, melting peak between -30° and 150°C ; and

(B) from 40 to 85 weight percent, based on the total weight of the mixture, of at least one second ethylene polymer which is a homogeneously branched, heterogeneously branched linear, or high density ethylene polymer having a density between 0.890 and 0.942 g/cc;

wherein the polymer mixture is characterized as having a density of from 0.890 to 0.930 g/cc, and a differential between the densities of the first ethylene polymer and the second ethylene polymer of at least 0.015 g/cc, Vicat softening point of at least 75°C ; and
wherein

- (a) a 0.038 mm thick film sealant layer fabricated from the polymer mixture has a heat seal initiation temperature equal to or less than 100°C and an ultimate hot tack strength equal to or greater than 2.56 N/cm, and
- (b) the Vicat softening point of the polymer mixture is more than 6°C higher than the heat seal initiation temperature of the film sealant layer.

[0013] The subject invention further provides any of the polymer mixtures as defined herein in the form of a fabricated film, film layer, coating or molded article for such uses as cook-in bags, pouches for flowable materials, barrier shrink films, injected molded lids and packaging film sealant layers.

[0014] These and other embodiments will be more fully described in detail herein below.

FIG. 1 is a plot of percent residual crystallinity as a function of density for Example and Comparative polymer mixtures and for single compositions of substantially linear ethylene polymers and heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers.

FIG. 2 is a plot of heat seal initiation temperature as a function of Vicat softening point in $^\circ\text{C}$ for Example and Comparative polymer mixtures and for single polymer compositions of substantially linear ethylene polymers and heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers.

FIG. 3 is a plot of hot tack initiation temperature in $^\circ\text{C}$ as a function of density in g/cc for Example and Comparative polymer mixtures and for single polymer compositions of substantially linear ethylene polymers and heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers.

FIG. 4 is a plot of hot tack initiation temperature in $^\circ\text{C}$ as a function of Vicat softening point in $^\circ\text{C}$ for Example and Comparative polymer mixtures and for single polymer compositions of substantially linear ethylene polymers and heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers.

FIG. 5 is a graphical illustration of the proper alignment between an initial, unexposed print of the edge configuration of an ASTM flex bar and a subsequent bar print following exposure to an elevated oven temperature. The distance between the bar prints is taken as heat sag in centimeters for Examples.

FIG. 6 is a graphical illustration of a differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) "first heat" melting curve which illus-

trates the portion of the curve above 100°C that is actually quantified for 100°C percent residual crystallinity determinations.

[0015] The term "polymer", as used herein, refers to a polymeric compound prepared by polymerizing monomers, whether of the same or a different type. The generic term polymer thus embraces the term "homopolymer", usually employed to refer to polymers prepared from only one type of monomer, and the term "interpolymer", as defined hereinafter.

[0016] The term "interpolymer", as used herein, refers to polymers prepared by the polymerization of at least two different types of monomers. The generic term "interpolymer" thus includes the term "copolymers", which is usually employed to refer to polymers prepared from two different monomers, as well as to polymers prepared from more than two different types of monomers.

[0017] The term "percent residual crystallinity", as used herein, refers to a first heat differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) determination of that amount of polymer material that melts at temperatures above 100°C or 110°C. The test method used to determine the percent residual crystallinity of Examples is provided below.

[0018] The terms "controlled modulus" and "controllably low or high modulus", as used herein, refer to the ability to affect the modulus of a film, coating or molded article essentially independent of the heat resistivity of the polymer mixture or the heat seal initiation temperature of a sealant layer made from the polymer mixture by specifying ("controlling") the final density of the mixture.

[0019] The term "expected extractive amount", as used herein, refers to the additive weight percent of n-hexane extractives expected based on the weight fraction calculation for the individual n-hexane extractive levels contributed by the first and second ethylene polymers of a polymer mixture. As an example of the calculation, where a polymer mixture comprises (I) 30 weight percent of a first ethylene polymer which has a n-hexane extractive level of 50 weight percent, and (II) 70 weight percent of a second ethylene polymer which has a n-hexane extractive level of 10 weight percent, the polymer mixture will have an expected extractive amount of 22 weight percent where 15 weight percent would be contributed by the first ethylene polymer and 7 weight percent would be contributed by the second ethylene polymer.

[0020] The term "compositional hexane extractive level", as used herein, refers to the total weight percent of n-hexane extracted from an Example in accordance with the test method set forth in 21 CFR 177.1520 (d)(3)(ii).

[0021] The term "heat seal initiation temperature", as used herein, refers to the minimum temperature at which a 0.038 mm thick film sealant layer of a nylon/adhesive/sealant coextruded film structure measures a heat seal strength of at least 0.4 kg/cm when folded over and sealed to itself. The test method used to determine the heat seal initiation temperature of Examples, including the description of the coextruded film structure used, is provided herein below.

[0022] The term "ultimate hot tack strength", as used herein, refers to the maximum hot tack strength of a 0.038 mm thick film sealant layer in a nylon/adhesive/sealant coextruded structure. The test method used to determine the ultimate hot tack strength of Examples is provided herein below.

[0023] The first ethylene polymer of the mixture of the invention, Component (A), is described as at least one substantially linear ethylene polymer having a density in the range of 0.850 to 0.920 g/cc. When used to fabricate the film and coating of the invention, the first ethylene polymer will have a density of greater than 0.865 g/cc, preferably greater than 0.875 g/cc, more preferably greater than 0.880 g/cc. When used to fabricate the film and coating of the invention, the first ethylene polymer will also have a density of less than 0.920 g/cc, preferably less than 0.910 g/cc, more preferably less than 0.900 g/cc. When used to fabricate the molded article of the invention, for purposes of, but not limited to, maximizing heat resistivity, the first ethylene polymer will have a density less than 0.890 g/cc, preferably less than 0.875 g/cc, more preferably less than 0.870 g/cc.

[0024] When the first ethylene polymer has a density of less than 0.900 g/cc, it will be further characterized as having a n-hexane extractive level of substantially 100 weight percent based on the weight of the first ethylene polymer. When the first ethylene polymer has a density less than 0.850 g/cc, it becomes tacky and difficult to handle in dry-blending operations. For the fabricated film and coating of the invention, when the first ethylene polymer has a density greater than 0.920 g/cc, heat seal and hot tack properties will be undesirably reduced. Also for the fabricated film and coating of the invention, when the density of the first ethylene polymer is less than 0.865 g/cc, the Vicat softening point will be undesirably low. For the molded article of the invention, when the first ethylene polymer has a density greater than 0.890 g/cc, undesirably, the heat resistivity of the mixture will be lower.

[0025] The second ethylene polymer of the polymer mixture of the invention, Component (B), is described as at least one homogeneously branched, heterogeneously branched linear, or non-short chain branched linear ethylene polymer having a density in the range of 0.890 to 0.965 g/cc. As such, suitable ethylene polymers are contemplated to include homogeneously branched linear ethylene interpolymers, heterogeneously branched linear ethylene interpolymers (both of the preceding include polymer classes known as linear low density polyethylene (LLDPE), medium density polyethylene (MDPE), copolymer high density polyethylene (HDPE) and ultra low or very low density polyethylene (ULDPE or VLDPE)), substantially linear ethylene polymers, homopolymer high density polyethylene (HDPE) (referred

to herein as "non-short chain branched linear ethylene polymers"), and combinations thereof.

[0026] When used to fabricate the film and coating of the invention, the second ethylene polymer will have a density greater than 0.890 g/cc, preferably greater than 0.900 g/cc, more preferably greater than 0.910 g/cc. When used to fabricate the film and coating of the invention, the second ethylene polymer will also have a density of less than 0.942 g/cc, preferably less than 0.940 g/cc, more preferably less than 0.938 g/cc. At densities greater than 0.942 g/cc, the differential between the Vicat softening point of the mixture (which is considered herein to be the same for a film fabricated from the mixture) and the heat seal initiation temperature of a 0.038 mm thick coextruded sealant layer is undesirably low (that is, $\leq 6^{\circ}\text{C}$). When the density of the second ethylene polymer is less than 0.890 g/cc, the compositional hexane extractive level of the mixture is undesirably high.

[0027] When used to fabricate the molded article of the invention, the second ethylene polymer will have a density of at least 0.930 g/cc. according to claim 1 the maximum density of (B) is 0,9429/cc.

[0028] For direct food contact applications, preferably the second ethylene polymer will be further characterized as having a n-hexane extractive level of no more than 10 weight percent, preferably no more than 6 weight percent based on the weight of the second ethylene polymer.

[0029] The terms "homogeneous" and "homogeneously branched" are used in the conventional sense in reference to an ethylene polymer in which the comonomer is randomly distributed within a given polymer molecule and wherein substantially all of the polymer molecules have the same ethylene to comonomer molar ratio. Homogeneously branched polymers are characterized by a short chain branching distribution index (SCBDI) greater than or equal to 30 percent, preferably greater than or equal to 50 percent, more preferably greater than or equal to 90 percent. The SCBDI is defined as the weight percent of the polymer molecules having a comonomer content within 50 percent of the median total molar comonomer content. The SCBDI of polyolefins can be determined by well-known temperature rising elution fractionation techniques, such as those described by Wild et al., Journal of Polymer Science, Poly. Phys. Ed., Vol. 20, p. 441 (1982), L. D. Cady, "The Role of Comonomer Type and Distribution in LLDPE Product Performance," SPE Regional Technical Conference, Quaker Square Hilton, Akron, Ohio, October 1-2, pp. 107-119 (1985), or US Patent 4,798,081.

[0030] The term "substantially linear" means that, in addition to the short chain branches attributable to homogeneous comonomer incorporation, the ethylene polymer is further characterized as having long chain branches in that the polymer backbone is substituted with an average of 0.01 to 3 long chain branch/1000 carbons. Preferred substantially linear polymers for use in the invention are substituted with from 0.01 long chain branch/1000 carbons to 1 long chain branch/1000 carbons, and more preferably from 0.05 long chain branch/1000 carbons to 1 long chain branches/1000 carbons.

[0031] Long chain branching is defined herein as a chain length of at least 6 carbons, above which the length cannot be distinguished using ^{13}C nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy. The long chain branch can be as long as about the same length as the length of the polymer backbone to which it is attached.

[0032] The presence of long chain branching can be determined in ethylene homopolymers by using ^{13}C nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy and is quantified using the method described by Randall (Rev. Macromol. Chem. Phys., C29, V. 2&3, p. 285-297).

[0033] As a practical matter, current ^{13}C nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy cannot determine the length of a long chain branch in excess of six carbon atoms. However, there are other known techniques useful for determining the presence of long chain branches in ethylene polymers, including ethylene/1-octene interpolymers. Two such methods are gel permeation chromatography coupled with a low angle laser light scattering detector (GPC-LALLS) and gel permeation chromatography coupled with a differential viscometer detector (GPC-DV). The use of these techniques for long chain branch detection and the underlying theories have been well documented in the literature. See, for example, Zimm, G.H. and Stockmayer, W.H., J. Chem. Phys., 17, 1301 (1949) and Rudin, A., Modern Methods of Polymer Characterization, John Wiley & Sons, New York (1991) pp. 103-112.

[0034] A. Willem deGroot and P. Steve Chum, both of The Dow Chemical Company, at the October 4, 1994 conference of the Federation of Analytical Chemistry and Spectroscopy Society (FACSS) in St. Louis, Missouri, presented data demonstrating that GPC-DV is a useful technique for quantifying the presence of long chain branches in substantially linear ethylene interpolymers. In particular, deGroot and Chum found that the level of long chain branches in substantially linear ethylene homopolymer samples measured using the Zimm-Stockmayer equation correlated well with the level of long chain branches measured using ^{13}C NMR.

[0035] Further, deGroot and Chum found that the presence of octene does not change the hydrodynamic volume of the polyethylene samples in solution and, as such, one can account for the molecular weight increase attributable to octene short chain branches by knowing the mole percent octene in the sample. By deconvoluting the contribution to molecular weight increase attributable to 1-octene short chain branches, deGroot and Chum showed that GPC-DV may be used to quantify the level of long chain branches in substantially linear ethylene/octene copolymers.

[0036] deGroot and Chum also showed that a plot of $\text{Log}(I_2, \text{Melt Index})$ as a function of $\text{Log}(\text{GPC Weight Average Molecular Weight})$ as determined by GPC-DV illustrates that the long chain branching aspects (but not the extent of

long branching) of substantially linear ethylene polymers are comparable to that of high pressure, highly branched low density polyethylene (LDPE) and are clearly distinct from ethylene polymers produced using Ziegler-type catalysts such as titanium complexes and ordinary homogeneous catalysts such as hafnium and vanadium complexes.

[0037] For ethylene/alpha-olefin interpolymers, the long chain branch is longer than the short chain branch that results from the incorporation of the alpha-olefin(s) into the polymer backbone. The empirical effect of the presence of long chain branching in the substantial linear ethylene/alpha-olefin interpolymers used in the invention is manifested as enhanced rheological properties which are quantified and expressed herein in terms of gas extrusion rheometry (GER) results and/or melt flow, I_{10}/I_2 , increases.

[0038] In contrast to the term "substantially linear ethylene polymer", the term "linear ethylene polymer" means that the ethylene polymer lacks measurable or demonstrable long chain branches, that is, the polymer is substituted with an average of less than 0.01 long branch/1000 carbons.

[0039] Substantially linear ethylene polymers are further characterized as having

(a) a melt flow ratio, $I_{10}/I_2 \geq 5.63$,

(b) a molecular weight distribution, M_w/M_n , as determined by gel permeation chromatography and defined by the equation:

$$(M_w/M_n) \leq (I_{10}/I_2) - 4.63,$$

(c) a critical shear stress at the onset of gross melt fracture, as determined by gas extrusion rheometry, of greater than 4×10^6 dynes/cm², or

a gas extrusion rheology such that the critical shear rate at onset of surface melt fracture for the substantially linear ethylene polymer is at least 50 percent greater than the critical shear rate at the onset of surface melt fracture for a linear ethylene polymer, wherein the substantially linear ethylene polymer and the linear ethylene polymer comprise the same comonomer or comonomers, the linear ethylene polymer has an I_2 , M_w/M_n and density within ten percent of the substantially linear ethylene polymer and wherein the respective critical shear rates of the substantially linear ethylene polymer and the linear ethylene polymer are measured at the same melt temperature using a gas extrusion rheometer, and

(d) a single differential scanning calorimetry, DSC, melting peak between -30° and 150°C.

[0040] Determination of the critical shear rate and critical shear stress in regards to melt fracture as well as other rheology properties such as "rheological processing index" (PI), is performed using a gas extrusion rheometer (GER). The gas extrusion rheometer is described by M. Shida, R.N. Shroff and L.V. Cancio in Polymer Engineering Science, Vol. 17, No.11, p. 770 (1977), and in "Rheometers for Molten Plastics" by John Dealy, published by Van Nostrand Reinhold Co. (1982) on pp. 97-99. GER experiments are performed at a temperature of 190°C, at nitrogen pressures between 250 to 5500 psig using a 0.0754 mm diameter, 20:1 L/D die with an entrance angle of 180°. For the substantially linear ethylene polymers described herein, the PI is the apparent viscosity (in kpoise) of a material measured by GER at an apparent shear stress of 2.15×10^6 dyne/cm². The substantially linear ethylene polymer for use in the invention includes ethylene interpolymers and homopolymers and have a PI in the range of 0.01 kpoise to 50 kpoise, preferably 15 kpoise or less. The substantially linear ethylene polymers used herein have a PI less than or equal to 70 percent of the PI of a linear ethylene polymer (either a Ziegler polymerized polymer or a linear homogeneously branched polymer as described by Elston in US Patent 3,645,992) having an I_2 , M_w/M_n and density, each within ten percent of the substantially linear ethylene polymers.

[0041] The rheological behavior of substantially linear ethylene polymers can also be characterized the Dow Rheology Index (DRI), which expresses a polymer's "normalized relaxation time as the result of long chain branching." (See, S. Lai and G.W. Knight ANTEC '93 Proceedings, INSITE™ Technology Polyolefins (ITP) - New Rules in the Structure/Rheology Relationship of Ethylene α -Olefin Copolymers, New Orleans, La., May 1993). DRI values range from 0 for polymers which do not have any measurable long chain branching (for example, Tafmer™ products available from Mitsui Petrochemical Industries and Exact™ products available from Exxon Chemical Company) to about 15 and is independent of melt index. In general, for low to medium pressure ethylene polymers (particularly at lower densities) DRI provides improved correlations to melt elasticity and high shear flowability relative to correlations of the same attempted with melt flow ratios. For the substantially linear ethylene polymers useful in this invention, DRI is preferably at least 0.1, and especially at least 0.5, and most especially at least 0.8. DRI can be calculated from the equation:

$$DRI = (3652879 \cdot \tau_o \cdot 1.00649_{/\eta_o} - 1)/10$$

where τ_0 is the characteristic relaxation time of the material and η_0 is the zero shear viscosity of the material. Both τ_0 and η_0 are the "best fit" values to the Cross equation, that is,

$$\eta/\eta_0 = 1/(1 + (\dot{\gamma} \tau_0)^{1-n})$$

5

where n is the power law index of the material, and η and $\dot{\gamma}$ are the measured viscosity and shear rate, respectively. Baseline determination of viscosity and shear rate data are obtained using a Rheometric Mechanical Spectrometer (RMS-800) under dynamic sweep mode from 0.1 to 100 radians/second at 190°C and a Gas Extrusion Rheometer (GER) at extrusion pressures from 1,000 psi to 5,000 psi (6.89 to 34.5 MPa), which corresponds to shear stress from 0.086 to 0.43 MPa, using a 0.752 mm diameter, 20:1 L/D die at 190°C. Specific material determinations can be performed from 140° to 190°C as required to accommodate melt index variations.

10

[0042] An apparent shear stress versus apparent shear rate plot is used to identify the melt fracture phenomena and quantify the critical shear rate and critical shear stress of ethylene polymers. According to Ramamurthy in the Journal of Rheology, 30(2), 337-357, 1986, above a certain critical flow rate, the observed extrudate irregularities may be broadly classified into two main types: surface melt fracture and gross melt fracture.

15

[0043] Surface melt fracture occurs under apparently steady flow conditions and ranges in detail from loss of specular film gloss to the more severe form of "sharkskin." Herein, as determined using the above-described GER, the onset of surface melt fracture (OSMF) is characterized at the beginning of losing extrudate gloss at which the surface roughness of the extrudate can only be detected by 40x magnification. The critical shear rate at the onset of surface melt fracture for the substantially linear ethylene interpolymers and homopolymers is at least 50 percent greater than the critical shear rate at the onset of surface melt fracture of a linear ethylene polymer having essentially the same I_2 and M_w/M_n .

20

[0044] Gross melt fracture occurs at unsteady extrusion flow conditions and ranges in detail from regular (alternating rough and smooth, helical, etc.) to random distortions. For commercial acceptability to maximize the performance properties of films, coatings and moldings, surface defects should be minimal, if not absent. The critical shear stress at the onset of gross melt fracture for the substantially linear ethylene polymers, especially those having a density >0.910 g/cc, used in the invention is greater than 4×10^6 dynes/cm². The critical shear rate at the onset of surface melt fracture (OSMF) and the onset of gross melt fracture (OGMF) will be used herein based on the changes of surface roughness and configurations of the extrudates extruded by a GER. Preferably, the substantially linear ethylene polymer will be characterized by its critical shear rate when used as the first ethylene polymer of the invention and by its critical shear stress when used as the second ethylene polymer of the invention.

25

[0045] The substantially linear ethylene polymers used in the invention are also characterized by a single DSC melting peak. The single melting peak is determined using a differential scanning calorimeter standardized with indium and deionized water. The method involves 5-7 mg sample sizes, a "first heat" to about 140°C which is held for 4 minutes, a cool down at 10°/min. to -30°C which is held for 3 minutes, and heat up at 10°C/min. to 140°C for the "second heat". The single melting peak is taken from the "second heat" heat flow vs. temperature curve. Total heat of fusion of the polymer is calculated from the area under the curve.

35

[0046] For polymers having a density of 0.875 g/cc to 0.910 g/cc, the single melting peak may show, depending on equipment sensitivity, a "shoulder" or a "hump" on the low melting side that constitutes less than 12 percent, typically, less than 9 percent, and more typically less than 6 percent of the total heat of fusion of the polymer. Such an artifact is observable for other homogeneously branched polymers such as Exact™ resins and is discerned on the basis of the slope of the single melting peak varying monotonically through the melting region of the artifact. Such an artifact occurs within 34°C, typically within 27°C, and more typically within 20°C of the melting point of the single melting peak. The heat of fusion attributable to an artifact can separately determined by specific integration of its associated area under the heat flow vs. temperature curve.

40

[0047] The substantially linear ethylene polymers are analyzed by gel permeation chromatography (GPC) on a Waters 150 high temperature chromatographic unit equipped with differential refractometer and three columns of mixed porosity. The columns are supplied by Polymer Laboratories and are commonly packed with pore sizes of $10^3, 10^4, 10^5$ and 10^6 Å. The solvent is 1,2,4-trichlorobenzene, from which 0.3 percent by weight solutions of the samples are prepared for injection. The flow rate is 1.0 milliliters/minute, unit operating temperature is 140°C and the injection size is 100 microliters.

50

[0048] The molecular weight determination with respect to the polymer backbone is deduced by using narrow molecular weight distribution polystyrene standards (from Polymer Laboratories) in conjunction with their elution volumes. The equivalent polyethylene molecular weights are determined by using appropriate Mark-Houwink coefficients for polyethylene and polystyrene (as described by Williams and Ward in Journal of Polymer Science, Polymer Letters, Vol. 6, p. 621, 1968) to derive the following equation:

55

$$M_{\text{polyethylene}} = a * (M_{\text{polystyrene}})^b.$$

[0049] In this equation, $a = 0.4316$ and $b = 1.0$. Weight average molecular weight, M_w , is calculated in the usual manner according to the following formula: $M_w = \sum w_i \times M_i$, where w_i and M_i are the weight fraction and molecular weight, respectively, of the i^{th} fraction eluting from the GPC column.

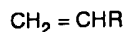
[0050] Substantially linear ethylene polymers are known to have excellent processability, despite having a relatively narrow molecular weight distribution (that is, the M_w/M_n ratio is typically less than 3.5, preferably less than 2.5, and more preferably less than 2). Moreover, unlike homogeneously and heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers, the melt flow ratio (I_{10}/I_2) of substantially linear ethylene polymers can be varied essentially independently of the molecular weight distribution, M_w/M_n . Accordingly, the first ethylene polymer, Component (A), of the inventive polymer mixtures is a substantially linear ethylene polymer. In addition to having enhanced rheological properties, at least one substantially linear ethylene polymer is used in the invention as the first ethylene polymer for purposes of providing, but not limited to, high ultimate hot tack strength, that is, ≥ 6.5 N/inch (2.56 N/cm).

[0051] Substantially linear ethylene polymers are homogeneously branched ethylene polymers and are disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,272,236 and U.S. Patent No. 5,272,272. Homogeneously branched substantially linear ethylene polymers are available from The Dow Chemical Company as Affinity™ polyolefin plastomers, and as Engage™ polyolefin elastomers. Homogeneously branched substantially linear ethylene polymers can be prepared via the solution, slurry, or gas phase polymerization of ethylene and one or more optional alpha-olefin comonomers in the presence of a constrained geometry catalyst, such as is disclosed in European Patent Application 416,815. Preferably, a solution polymerization process is used to manufacture the substantially linear ethylene interpolymer used in the present invention.

[0052] Homogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers have long been commercially available. As exemplified in U.S. Patent No. 3,645,992 to Elston, homogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers can be prepared in conventional polymerization processes using Ziegler-type catalysts such as, for example, zirconium and vanadium catalyst systems. U.S. Patent No. 4,937,299 to Ewen et al. and U.S. Patent No. 5,218,071 to Tsutsui et al. disclose the use of metallocene catalysts, such as catalyst systems based on hafnium, for the preparation of homogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers. Homogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers are typically characterized as having a molecular weight distribution, M_w/M_n , of about 2. Commercial examples of homogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers include those sold by Mitsui Petrochemical Industries as Tafmer™ resins and by Exxon Chemical Company as Exact™ resins.

[0053] The terms "heterogeneous" and "heterogeneously branched" mean that the ethylene polymer is characterized as a mixture of interpolymer molecules having various ethylene to comonomer molar ratios. Heterogeneously branched ethylene polymers are characterized as having a short chain branching distribution index (SCBDI) less than about 30 percent. Heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers are available from The Dow Chemical Company as Dowlex™ linear low density polyethylene and as Attane™ ultra-low density polyethylene resins. Heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymers can be prepared via the solution, slurry or gas phase polymerization of ethylene and one or more optional alpha-olefin comonomers in the presence of a Ziegler Natta catalyst, by processes such as are disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,076,698 to Anderson et al. Preferably, heterogeneously branched ethylene polymers are typically characterized as having molecular weight distributions, M_w/M_n , in the range of from 3.5 to 4.1.

[0054] The ethylene polymers useful as component (A) or (B) of the mixtures of the invention can independently be interpolymers of ethylene and at least one alpha-olefin. Suitable alpha-olefins are represented by the following formula:



where R is a hydrocarbyl radical. The comonomer which forms a part of component (A) may be the same as or different from the comonomer which forms a part of component (B) of the inventive mixture.

[0055] Further, R may be a hydrocarbyl radical having from one to twenty carbon atoms. Suitable alpha-olefins for use as comonomers in a solution, gas phase or slurry polymerization process or combinations thereof include 1-propylene, 1-butene, 1-isobutylene, 1-pentene, 1-hexene, 4-methyl-1-pentene, 1-heptene and 1-octene, as well as other monomer types such as styrene, halo- or alkylsubstituted styrenes, tetrafluoro-ethylene, vinyl benzocyclobutane, 1,4-hexadiene, 1,7-octadiene, and cycloalkenes, for example, cyclopentene, cyclohexene and cyclooctene. Preferably, the alpha-olefin will be 1-butene, 1-pentene, 4-methyl-1-pentene, 1-hexene, 1-heptene, 1-octene, or mixtures thereof. More preferably, the alpha-olefin will be 1-hexene, 1-heptene, 1-octene, or mixtures thereof, as films fabricated with the resultant interpolymers will have especially improved puncture resistance, dart impact, and tear strength properties where such higher alpha-olefins are utilized as comonomers. However, most preferably, the alpha-olefin will be 1-octene.

[0056] The polymer mixture of the invention will have a density of from 0.890 to 0.930 g/cc as measured in accordance with ASTM D792. Further, the polymer mixture of the invention will have a density of at least 0.890 g/cc, preferably of at least 0.903 g/cc, more preferably of at least 0.909 g/cc. The polymer mixture of the invention will have a density of less than 0.930 g/cc, preferably less than 0.928 g/cc, more preferably of less than 0.922 g/cc.

5 [0057] For the inventive polymer mixture, the difference between the densities of the first and second polymer is generally at least 0.015 g/cc, preferably, at least 0.025 g/cc, more preferably at least 0.045 g/cc. For purposes of the molded article of the invention, the density differential can be even higher such as at least 0.065 g/cc, especially at least 0.085 g/cc. In general, the higher the density differential, the more improved the heat resistance will be relative to a heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymer having essentially the same density and, as such, higher density

10 differentials are particularly preferred for the molded articles of the invention.
[0058] The polymer mixture comprises from 15 to 60 weight percent, preferably from 15 to 50, more preferably from 20 to 45 weight percent of the first ethylene polymer (A) based on the total weight of the mixture and from 40 to 85 weight percent, preferably from 50 to 85, more preferably from 55 to 80 weight percent at the second ethylene polymer (B) based on the total weight of the mixture.

15 [0059] Component (A) and component (B) will be independently characterized by an I_2 melt index of from 0.01 to 100 g/10 min. In preferred embodiments, components (A) and (B) will be independently characterized by an I_2 melt index of from 0.1 to 50 g/10 minutes. By "independently characterized" it is meant that the I_2 melt index of component (A) need not be the same as the I_2 melt index of component (B).

20 [0060] The I_2 of the polymer mixture of the invention will be from 0.01 to 100 g/10 min., preferably from 0.1 to 75 g/10 min., more preferably from 0.5 to 50 g/10 min. Generally, for polymer mixtures useful in preparing the fabricated film of the invention, the I_2 will be less than 30 g/10 min., preferably less than 20 g/10 min., more preferably less than 15 g/10 min. Generally, for polymer mixtures useful in preparing the molded article of the invention, the I_2 of the polymer mixture will be greater than 10 g/10 min., preferably greater than 15 g/10 min., more preferably greater than 20 g/10 min.

25 [0061] The polymer mixture of the invention is generally characterized as having a percent residual crystallinity, PRC, as defined by the equation:

$$PRC \geq 5.0195 \times 10^4 (\rho) - 2.7062 \times 10^4 (\rho)^2 - 2.3246 \times 10^4,$$

30 preferably

$$PRC \geq 5.7929 \times 10^4 (\rho) - 3.1231 \times 10^4 (\rho)^2 - 2.6828 \times 10^4,$$

35 more preferably

$$PRC \geq 6.4363 \times 10^4 (\rho) - 3.470 \times 10^4 (\rho)^2 - 2.9808 \times 10^4,$$

40 [0062] In the equations immediately above, ρ is the density of the polymer mixture in grams/cubic centimeters.

[0063] One preferred polymer mixture of the invention will be characterized as having a percent residual crystallinity which is at least 17.5 percent higher, preferably at least 20 percent higher, more preferably at least 35 percent higher, most preferably at least 50 percent higher than the percent residual crystallinity of a single linear ethylene polymer, or alternately, of a linear ethylene polymer mixture (that is, a polymer mixture wherein essentially all component polymers

45 have a linear polymer backbone) having essentially the same density.
[0064] A plot of percent residual crystallinity of the polymer mixture of the invention as a function of density (FIG. 1), will show a maximum percent residual crystallinity value for polymer mixtures characterized by a density in the range of 0.890 to 0.930 g/cc.

50 [0065] Where a polymer mixture of the invention does not have a percent residual crystallinity at least equal to or higher than the percent residual crystallinity of a linear ethylene polymer (or linear ethylene polymer mixture) having essentially the same density, such inventive polymer mixture will be distinguished by its enhanced performance in the form of monolayer or coextruded film, or alternately, such mixture will comprise a first ethylene polymer which has a n-hexane extractive level of substantially 100 weight percent and the polymer mixture will be further characterized as having a compositional hexane extractive level of less than 30 percent, preferably less than 40 percent, more preferably

55 less than 50 percent, especially less than 80 percent, most especially less than 90 percent lower than the expected extractive amount for the mixture based on the total weight of the mixture.

[0066] A preferred polymer mixture of the invention will be characterized as having a compositional hexane extractive level of less than 15 percent, preferably less than 10 percent, more preferably less than 6, most preferably less than

3 percent based on the total weight of the mixture.

[0067] Temperature rising elution fractionation (TREF) such as described by Wild et al. can be used to "fingerprint" or identify the novel mixtures of the invention.

[0068] Another preferred polymer mixture of the invention will be characterized by a Vicat softening point of at least 75°C, preferably at least 85°C, and more preferably at least 90°C.

[0069] In another embodiment, a preferred polymer mixture of the invention, when fabricated as a 1.5 mil (0.038 mm) thick sealant layer of a nylon/adhesive/sealant blown coextruded film, will be characterized by a heat seal initiation temperature of less than 100°C, preferably less than 90°C, more preferably less than 85°C, most preferably less than 80°C.

[0070] In another embodiment, a preferred polymer mixture of the invention will have a Vicat softening point more than 6°C higher, preferably at least 8°C higher, more preferably at least 10°C higher, especially at least 15°C higher, most especially at least 20°C higher than the heat seal initiation temperature of a 1.5 mil (0.038 mm) thick sealant layer (fabricated from the polymer mixture) of a nylon/adhesive/sealant blown coextruded film.

[0071] In another embodiment, a polymer mixture of the invention, when molded into an essentially flat part having a thickness of 125 mils (23.17mm), will be characterized as having a microwave warp distortion of less than 0.75 cm, preferably less than 0.70 cm and most preferably less than or equal to 0.65 cm while maintaining a flexural modulus of less than 35,000 psi (241.4 MPa), preferably less than 30,000 psi (206.9 MPa), more preferably less than 25,000 psi (172.4 MPa).

[0072] A preferred molded article of the invention will show a heat resistivity superior to a linear ethylene polymer having a density of 0.927 g/cc while simultaneously showing a controllably low flexural modulus, that is, having a flexural modulus lower than a linear ethylene polymer having a density less than 0.927 g/cc, preferably less than 0.920 g/cc, more preferably less than 0.912 g/cc.

[0073] Another embodiment of the present invention is a process for fabricating the polymer mixture of the invention into the form of a film, film layer, coating or molded article. The process can include a lamination and coextrusion technique or combinations thereof, or using the polymer mixture alone, and includes a blown film, cast film, extrusion coating, injection molding, blow molding, compression molding, rotomolding, or injection blow molding operation or combinations thereof.

[0074] The polymer mixture of the invention can be formed by any convenient method, including dry blending the individual components and subsequently melt mixing in a mixer or by mixing the components together directly in a mixer (for example, a Banbury mixer, a Haake mixer, a Brabender internal mixer, or a single or twin screw extruder including a compounding extruder and a side-arm extruder) employed directly downstream of a interpolymerization process.

[0075] The mixtures of the invention can further be formed *in-situ* via the interpolymerization of ethylene and the desired alpha-olefin using a constrained geometry catalyst in at least one reactor and a constrained geometry catalyst or a Ziegler-type catalyst in at least one other reactor. The reactors can be operated sequentially or in parallel. An exemplary *in-situ* interpolymerization process is disclosed in PCT Patent Application 94/01052.

[0076] The polymer mixture of the invention can further be formed by isolating component (A) from a heterogeneous ethylene polymer by fractionating the heterogeneous ethylene polymer into specific polymer fractions with each fraction having a narrow branching distribution, selecting the fractions appropriate to meet the limitations specified for component (A), and blending the selected fraction in the appropriate amounts with a component (B). This method is obviously not as economical as the *in-situ* polymerization described above, but can nonetheless be used to obtain the polymer mixture of the invention.

[0077] Additives, such as antioxidants (for example, hindered phenolics, such as Irganox™ 1010 or Irganox™ 1076 supplied by Ciba Geigy), phosphites (for example, Irgafos™ 168 also supplied by Ciba Geigy), cling additives (for example, PIB), Standostab PEPQ™ (supplied by Sandoz), pigments, colorants, and fillers may also be included in the polymer mixture of the present invention or in films formed from the same. Although generally not required, films, coatings and moldings formed from the polymer mixture of the present invention may also contain additives to enhance antiblocking, mold release and coefficient of friction characteristics including, but not limited to, untreated and treated silicon dioxide, talc, calcium carbonate, and clay, as well as primary, secondary and substituted fatty acid amides, release agents, silicone coatings, etc. Still other additives, such as quaternary ammonium compounds alone or in combination with ethylene-acrylic acid (EAA) copolymers or other functional polymers, may also be added to enhance the antistatic characteristics of films, coatings and moldings formed from the polymer mixture of the invention and permit the use of these polymer mixtures in, for example, the heavy-duty packaging of electronically sensitive goods.

[0078] The polymer mixture of the invention can further include recycled and scrap materials and diluent polymers, to the extent that the desired performance properties are maintained. Exemplary diluent materials include, for example, elastomers, rubbers and anhydride modified polyethylenes (for example, polybutylene and maleic anhydride grafted LLDPE and HDPE) as well as with high pressure polyethylenes such as, for example, low density polyethylene (LDPE), ethylene/acrylic acid (EAA) interpolymers, ethylene/vinyl acetate (EVA) interpolymers and ethylene/methacrylate

(EMA) interpolymers, and combinations thereof.

[0079] The polymer mixture of the invention can find utility in a variety of applications, including but not limited to shrink film (including but not limited to barrier shrink film), packages formed via horizontal or vertical form/fill/seal machinery, cook-in packaged foods, injection molded containers (particularly food storage containers), etc.

[0080] Barrier shrink film refers to oriented films (typically biaxially oriented films) which are caused to shrink about a packaged article upon the application of heat. Barrier shrink films find utility in the packaging of primal and subprimal cuts of meat, ham, poultry, bacon, cheese, etc. A typical barrier-shrink film utilizing the polymer mixture of the invention may be a three to seven layer co-extruded structure, with a heat sealing food contact layer (such as the polymer mixture of the invention), an outer layer (such as heterogeneously branched linear low density or ultra-low density polyethylene), and a barrier layer (such as a vinylidene chloride polymer or copolymer) interposed between. Adhesion promoting tie layers (such as Primacor™ ethylene-acrylic acid (EAA) copolymers available from The Dow Chemical Company, and/or ethylene-vinyl acetate (EVA) copolymers, as well as additional structural layers (such as Affinity™ polyolefin plastomers, Engage™ polyolefin elastomers, both available from The Dow Chemical Company, ultra-low density polyethylene, or blends of any of these polymers with each other or with another polymer, such as EVA) can be optionally employed. Barrier shrink films so fabricated with the mixtures of the invention will preferably shrink at least 25 percent in both the machine and transverse directions. Film or film layers fabricated from the polymer mixture of the invention are particularly well-suited as sealant layers in multilayer food packaging structures such as barrier shrink film and aseptic packages.

[0081] Cook-in packaged foods are foods which are prepackaged and then cooked. The packaged and cooked foods go directly to the consumer, institution, or retailer for consumption or sale. A package for cook-in must be structurally capable of withstanding exposure to cook-in time and temperature conditions while containing a food product. Cook-in packaged foods are typically employed for the packaging of ham, turkey, vegetables, processed meats, etc.

[0082] Vertical form/fill/seal packages are typically utilized for the packaging of flowable materials, such as milk, wine, powders, etc. In a vertical form/fill/seal (VFFS) packaging process, a sheet of the plastic film structure is fed into a VFFS machine where the sheet is formed into a continuous tube by sealing the longitudinal edges of the film together by lapping the plastic film and sealing the film using an inside/outside seal or by fin sealing the plastic film using an inside/inside seal. Next, a sealing bar seals the tube transversely at one end to form the bottom of a pouch. The flowable material is then added to the formed pouch. The sealing bar then seals the top end of the pouch and either burns through the plastic film or a cutting device cuts the film, thus separating the formed completed pouch from the tube. The process of making a pouch with a VFFS machine is generally described in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,503,102 and 4,521,437.

[0083] As stated above, in one embodiment, the polymer mixture of the invention will be characterized by a Vicat softening point of at least 75°C, more preferably of at least 85°, most preferably of at least 90°C. As further stated above, in one embodiment, the polymer mixture of the invention, when fabricated into a 1.5 mils (0.038 mm) blown coextruded film as a sealant layer having a thickness of, will further be characterized by a heat seal initiation temperature of less than 100°C, preferably less than 90°C, more preferably less than 85°C, most preferably less than 80°C.

[0084] As further stated above, in one embodiment, the polymer mixture of the invention will be characterized by a Vicat softening point which is more than 6°C, preferably equal to or more than 8°C, more preferably equal to or more than 10°C, especially equal to or more than 15°C, most especially equal to or more than 20°C higher than the heat seal initiation temperature of a 1.5 mil (0.038 mm) thick sealant layer (fabricated from the inventive polymer mixture) of a nylon/adhesive/sealant blown coextruded film.

[0085] As also stated above, in one embodiment, an essentially flat molded part fabricated from the polymer mixture of the invention will be characterized by having less than 0.75 cm, preferably less than 0.70 cm, and more preferably less than 0.65 cm of microwave warp distortion when exposed to low frequency microwave radiation energy for 5 minutes and while showing a flexural modulus of less than 35,000 psi (241.4 MPa) prior to microwave exposure.

[0086] One particular embodiment of the polymer mixture of the invention, especially suitable as a food packaging resin, when fabricated into a blown monolayer film having a thickness of 2 mils (0.051 mm), will be characterized as having a controllable 2 percent secant modulus (MD) in the range of 5,000 psi (34 MPa) to 35,000 psi (241 MPa), especially in the range of 7,000 psi (48 MPa) to 25,000 psi (172 MPa).

[0087] Another particular embodiment of the polymer mixture of the invention, especially suitable as a food packaging resin, when fabricated into a blown monolayer film having a thickness of 2 mil (0.051 mm), will be characterized by an Elmendorf tear (MD) of at least 300 g, preferably at least 600 g, and more preferably at least 800 g.

[0088] Another particular embodiment of the polymer mixture of the invention, especially suitable as a food packaging resin, when fabricated into a blown monolayer film having a thickness of 2 mil (0.051 mm), will be characterized by a Dart Impact (Type B) of greater than 300 g, preferably greater than 450 g, more preferably greater than 500 g, and most preferably greater than 600 g.

[0089] Another particular embodiment of the polymer mixture of the invention, especially suitable as a food packaging resin, when fabricated into a blown monolayer film having a thickness of 2 mil (0.051 mm), will be characterized by a

puncture resistance of greater than 150 ft-lb/in³ (126 kg-cm/cc), preferably greater than 200 ft-lb/in³ (168 kg-cm/cc), more preferably greater than 250 ft-lb/in³ (210 kg-cm/cc), more preferably at least 275-ft lb/in³ (231 kg-cm/cc), and most preferably at least 300 ft-lb/in³ (252 kg-cm/cc).

[0090] Densities are measured in accordance with ASTM D-792 and are reported as grams/cubic centimeter (g/cc). The measurements reported in the Examples below are determined after the polymer samples have been annealed for 24 hours at ambient conditions.

[0091] Melt index measurements are performed according to ASTM D-1238, Condition 190°C/2.16 kilogram (kg) and condition 190°C/5 kg which are known as I₂ and I₅, respectively. For purposes of this invention, in calculating certain values in the Examples, I₅ and I₂ values roughly relate to one another by a factor of about 5.1; for example, a 1.0 I₂ index melt is equivalent to a 5.1 I₅ melt index. Melt index is inversely proportional to the molecular weight of the polymer. Thus, the higher the molecular weight, the lower the melt index, although the relationship is not linear. Melt index is reported as g/10 minutes. Melt index determinations can also be performed with even higher weights, such as in accordance with ASTM D-1238, Condition 190°C/10 kg, which is known as I₁₀. The term "melt flow ratio" as defined herein in the conventional sense as the ratio of a higher weight melt index determination to a lower weight melt index determination. For measured I₁₀ and I₂ melt index values, the melt flow ratio is conveniently designated as I₁₀/I₂.

[0092] The Elmendorf tear values of films prepared from the mixtures of the invention is measured in accordance with ASTM D1922 and is reported in grams. Elmendorf tear is measured both the machine direction (MD) and in the cross direction (CD). The term "tear strength" is used herein to represent the average between MD and CD Elmendorf tear values and, likewise, is reported in grams. The dart impact of films prepared from the mixtures of the invention is measured in accordance with ASTM D1709. Where indicated and according to the relationship of higher thicknesses yield increased performance values, Elmendorf tear and dart impact results are normalized to exactly 2 mils (0.051 mm) by proportionate increases or decreases based on actual measured (micrometer) film thickness. Such normalization calculations are only performed and reported where thickness variations are less than 10 percent, that is, where the measured thickness is in the range of 1.8 - 2.2 mils (0.016-0.056mm).

[0093] Film puncture values are obtained using an Instron tensiometer equipped with a strain cell and an integrated digital display that provides force determinations. A single ply of a blown monolayer film having a thickness of 2 mils (0.051 mm) is mounted taut between the two halves of a circular holder constructed of aluminum and machined to couple the halves securely when they are joined together. The exposed film area when mounted in the holder is 4 inches (10.2 cm) in diameter. The holder is then affixed to the upper stationary jaw of the tensiometer. To the lower jaw of the tensiometer which is set to traverse upwardly, a hemispherical aluminum probe having a 125 mm diameter is affixed. The probe is aligned to traverse upwards through the center of the mounted film at a deformation rate of 250 mm/min. The force required to rupture the film is taken from the digital display and divided by the film thickness and the diameter of the probe to provide puncture resistance in kg-cm/cc.

[0094] Secant modulus is measured in accordance with ASTM D882 on 2 mil (0.051 mm) blown monolayer film fabricated from the Examples, the n-hexane extractive level is measured in accordance with 21 CFR 177.1520 (d)(3) (ii) on 4 mil=0.1 mm compression molded film fabricated from the Examples, and the Vicat softening point is measured in accordance with ASTM D1525 on 2 mil (0.051 mm) blown monolayer film fabricated from the Examples.

[0095] Heat seal initiation temperature is defined as the minimum temperature for a 2 lb/in (0.4 kg/cm) seal strength. Heat seal testing is performed using a 3.5 mil (0.089 mm) thick coextruded film of the following structure: 1 mil (0.025 mm) Capron Xtraform™ 1590F Nylon 6/6,6 copolymer available from Allied Chemical Company / 1 mil (0.025 mm) Primacor™ 1410 ethylene-acrylic acid (EAA) copolymer available from The Dow Chemical Company / 1.5 mil (0.038 mm) sealant layer of the polymer mixture of the Examples. The testing is done on a Topwave Hot Tack Tester using a 0.5 second dwell time with a 40 psi (0.28 MPa) seal bar pressure. The seals are made at 5° increments in the range of 60° - 160°C by folding the sealant layer over and sealing it to itself. The so-formed seals are pulled 24 hours after they are made using an Instron tensiometer at a 10 in/min. (25.1cm/min.) crosshead rate.

[0096] Hot tack initiation temperature is defined as the minimum seal temperature required to develop a 4 Newton/in (1.6 N/cm) seal strength. Hot tack testing is also performed using above-described three-layer coextruded structure and a Topwave Hot Tack Tester set at a 0.5 second dwell, 0.2 second delay time, and 40 psi (0.28 MPa) seal bar pressure. Hot tack seals are made at 5° increments in the temperature range of 60° - 160°C by folding the sealant layer over and hot tack sealing it to itself. The peel rate applied to the so-formed hot tack seals is of 150 mm/sec. The tester pulls the seal immediately after the 0.2 second delay. Ultimate hot tack strength is taken as the maximum N/cm value in the 60°-160°C temperature range for the Example.

[0097] Residual crystallinity is determined using a Perkin-Elmer DSC 7. The determination involves quantifying the heat of fusion of that portion of an Example above 100°C or 110°C at first heat. The area under "first heat" melting curve is determined by computer integration using Perkin-Elmer PC Series Software Version 3.1. FIG. 6 graphically illustrates a "first heat" melting curve and the area under the curve above 100°C actually integrated.

[0098] The ASTM test methods, as well as the test method promulgated by the Food and Drug Administration for hexane-extractive levels set forth in 21 CFR 177.1520 (d)(3)(ii).

Examples

[0099] The following examples are provided for the purpose of explanation, rather than limitation.

5 Examples 1-3:

[0100] Example 1 was prepared using an *in-situ* polymerization and mixture process, such as disclosed in PCT Patent Application No. 94/01052. The particular production details are set forth as follows.

10 Constrained Geometry Catalyst Preparation

[0101] A known weight of the constrained-geometry organometallic complex $[(\text{CH}_3)_4\text{C}_5)-(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{Si-N}-(\text{t-C}_4\text{H}_9)]\text{Ti}(\text{CH}_3)_2$ was dissolved in Isopar™ E hydrocarbon (available from Exxon Chemical Company) to give a clear solution with a titanium (Ti) concentration of 9.6×10^{-4} M. A similar solution of the activator complex tris(perfluorophenyl)borane (3.8×10^{-3} M) was also prepared. A known weight of methylalumoxane (available from Texas Alkyls as MMAO) was dissolved in n-heptane to give a solution with an MMAO concentration of 1.06×10^{-2} M. These solutions were independently pumped such that they were combined just prior to being fed into the first polymerization reactor and such that the constrained geometry catalyst, the activator complex, and the MMAO were in a molar ratio of 1:3.5:7.

20 Heterogeneous Catalyst Preparation

[0102] A heterogeneous Ziegler-type catalyst was prepared substantially according to the procedure of U.S. Patent No. 4,612,300 (Example P), by sequentially adding to a volume of Isopar™ E hydrocarbon, a slurry of anhydrous magnesium chloride in Isopar™ E hydrocarbon, a solution of EtAlCl_2 in n-hexane, and a solution of $\text{Ti}(\text{O-iPr})_4$ in Isopar™ E hydrocarbon, to yield a slurry containing a magnesium concentration of 0.166 M and a ratio of Mg/Al/Ti of 40.0:12.5:3.0. An aliquot of this slurry and a dilute solution of Et_3Al (TEA) were independently pumped with the two streams being combined just prior to introduction into the second polymerization reactor to give an active catalyst with a final TEA:Ti molar ratio of 6.2:1.

30 Polymerization process.

[0103] Ethylene was fed into a first reactor at a rate of 40 lb/hr (18.2 kg/hr). Prior to introduction into the first reactor, the ethylene was combined with a diluent mixture comprising Isopar™ E hydrocarbon (available from Exxon Chemical Company) and 1-octene. With respect to the first polymerization reactor, the 1-octene:ethylene ratio (constituting fresh and recycled monomer) was 0.28:1 (mole percent) and the diluent:ethylene feed ratio was 8.23:1 (weight percent). A homogeneous constrained geometry catalyst and cocatalyst such as prepared above were introduced into the first polymerization reactor. The catalyst, activator, and MMAO flow rates into the first polymerization reactor were 1.64×10^{-5} lbs. Ti/hr (7.4×10^{-6} kg Ti/hr), 6.21×10^{-4} lbs. activator/hr (2.82×10^{-4} kg activator/hr), and 6.57×10^{-5} lbs. MMAO/hr (3.0×10^{-5} kg MMAO/hr), respectively. The polymerization was conducted at a reaction temperature in the range of 70-160°C.

[0104] The reaction product of the first polymerization reactor was transferred to a second reactor. The ethylene concentration in the exit stream from the first polymerization reactor was less than four percent, indicating from a mass balance basis, the presence of long chain branching as described in U.S. Patent No. 5,272,236.

[0105] Ethylene was further fed into a second polymerization reactor at a rate of 120 lbs./hr (54.5 kg/hr). Prior to introduction into the second polymerization reactor, the ethylene and a stream of hydrogen were combined with a diluent mixture comprising Isopar™ E hydrocarbon and 1-octene. With respect to the second polymerization reactor, the 1-octene:ethylene feed ratio (constituting fresh and recycled monomer) was 0.196:1 (mole percent), the diluent:ethylene ratio was 5.91:1 (weight percent), and the hydrogen:ethylene feed ratio was 0.24:1 (mole percent). A heterogeneous Ziegler catalyst and cocatalyst as prepared above were introduced into the second polymerization reactor. The catalyst (Ti) and cocatalyst (TEA) concentrations in the second polymerization reactor were 2.65×10^{-3} and 1.65×10^{-3} molar, respectively. The catalyst and cocatalyst flow rates into the second polymerization reactor were 4.49×10^{-4} lbs. Ti/hr (2.04×10^{-4} kg Ti/hr) and 9.14×10^{-3} lbs. TEA/hr (4.15×10^{-3} kg TEA/hr) respectively. The polymerization was conducted at a reaction temperature in the range of 130°-200°C. The conversion and production split between the first and second polymerization reactors was such as to yield the "percent of mixture" value for Example 1 set forth in Table 1.

[0106] To the resulting polymer, a standard catalyst kill agent (1250 ppm Calcium Stearate) and antioxidants (200 ppm Irganox™ 1010, that is, tetrakis [methylene 3-(3,5-di-tert-butyl-4-hydroxyphenyl)propionate]methane, available from Ciba-Geigy and 800 ppm Sandostab™ PEPQ, that is, tetrakis-(2,4-di-tert-butyl-phenyl)-4,4' biphenylphosphonite,

available from Sandoz Chemical) were added to stabilize the polymer. Although the Calcium Stearate is known to conventionally function as a processing aid, comparative experiments have shown it does not contribute to the enhanced rheological properties of the substantially linear polymers useful in the invention.

[0107] The polymer mixtures of Examples 2 and 3 were prepared in a similar fashion. The split between the first and second polymerization reactors was such as to yield the "percent of mixture" values set forth in Table 1.

[0108] The densities, melt indices, and hexane extractive levels of the first reactor products, the second reactor products, and the resultant in-reactor mixtures as well as the Vicat softening point, density differential between the component polymers and expected n-hexane extractive amount of the in-reactor mixtures are further set forth in Table 1.

Examples 4-8 and Comparative Examples 9-13:

[0109] The mixtures of Examples 4-8 were prepared by dry blending the substantially linear ethylene polymer component (A) and the heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymer component (B) (or in the case of Example 5, the substantially linear ethylene polymer component (B)) in a lab scale mechanical tumble blender. Comparative Examples 9-11 were also prepared using the mechanical tumble blender. The component weight percentages based on the total weight of the respective polymer mixtures are set forth in Table 1. With respect to the individual component polymers, component (A) for Comparative Example 11 was a linear ethylene/1-butene copolymer commercially available from Mitsui Petrochemical Industries under the designation of Tafmer™ A4085. For Examples 4-8 and Comparative Examples 9-10, the substantially linear ethylene polymer component (A) and component (B) in the case of Example 5, was prepared by techniques disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,272,236 via a solution ethylene/1-octene interpolymerization process utilizing a $[(\text{CH}_3)_4\text{C}_5)-(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{Si}-\text{N}-(\text{t-C}_4\text{H}_9)]\text{Ti}(\text{CH}_3)_2$ activated with tris(perfluorophenyl)borane and MMAO. To the resulting polymer, a standard catalyst kill agent and the antioxidants described above were added to stabilize the polymer.

[0110] The heterogeneously branched components (B) of Examples 4-8 and Comparative Examples C9-C11 were solution-polymerized copolymers of ethylene and 1-octene manufactured with the use of a Ziegler titanium catalyst system. To the resulting polymers, Calcium Stearate, in quantities sufficient for functioning as a standard processing aid and as a catalyst kill agent, and as antioxidants, 200 ppm Irganox™ 1010 and 1600 ppm Irgafos™ 168, a phosphite stabilizer available from Ciba-Geigy, were added to stabilize the polymer and to enhance its rheological properties. Comparative Examples C12 and C13 are single polymer compositions in contrast to the above inventive and Comparative polymer mixtures. Comparative Example C12 was a substantially linear ethylene/1-octene copolymer also prepared by techniques disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,172,236 utilizing a $[(\text{CH}_3)_4\text{C}_5)-(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{Si}-\text{N}-(\text{t-C}_4\text{H}_9)]\text{Ti}(\text{CH}_3)_2$ activated with tris(perfluorophenyl)borane and MMAO. To the resulting polymer, calcium stearate as a catalyst kill agent and antioxidants as described above for Example 1 were added to stabilize the polymer. Comparative Example C13 was a heterogeneously branched linear ethylene/1-octene copolymer prepared in a solution process utilizing a Ziegler titanium catalyst system. The melt index of component (B) of Comparative Example C9 and the resultant mixture are reported as a corrected I_2 value using the correction factor discussed above. The component (B) second ethylene polymer of Comparative Example 9 had a measured 15 melt index of 0.26 g/10 minutes which has been corrected to 0.05 g/10 min.

[0111] The densities, melt indices, and n-hexane extractive level of the component polymers, resultant polymer mixtures and single polymer compositions as well as the Vicat softening point, density differential between the component polymers and the expected n-hexane extractive amount of the mixtures are set forth in Table 1.

Table 1

Example		1	2	3	4	5	6
First Ethylene Polymer	Polymer Type	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear
	Density (g/cc)	0.887	0.88	0.888	0.887	0.887	0.887
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	1.0	5.0	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5
	n-Hexane Extractives	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Percent of Mixture (wt percent)	20	28	42	20	50	50
Second Ethylene Polymer	Polymer Type	Hetero-geneously Branched Linear	Hetero-geneously Branched Linear	Hetero-geneously Branched Linear	Hetero-geneously Branched Linear	Substantially Linear	Hetero-geneously Branched Linear
	Density (g/cc)	0.920	0.925	0.926	0.920	0.902	0.912
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	1.0	1	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.0
	n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2
	Percent of Mixture (wt percent)	80	72	58	80	50	50
Polymer Mixture	Density (g/cc)	0.912	0.912	0.912	0.913	0.894	0.899
	First/Second Polymer Density Differential (g/cc)	0.033	0.045	0.038	0.033	0.015	0.025
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	1.05	1.5	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.7
	n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	0.8	0.8	0.7	ND	2.5	4.3
	Expected n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	21.6	29.4	43.2	21.6	51.0	51.0
	Percent Lower Than Expected Extractive Amount	96.3	97.3	98.4	NA	95.2	91.6
	Vicat Softening Point (VSP) (°C)	91.9	94.6	91.85	98.3	76.1	76.15

ND denotes the measurement was not determined.
 NA denotes the measurement is not applicable.

Table 1, Continued

5	Example	7	8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13
	First Ethylene Polymer					Homogeneously Branched Linear	None	Substantially Linear
10	Polymer Type	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	0.881	NA	0.920
	Density (g/cc)	0.887	0.896	0.887	0.871			
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	0.5	1.3	0.5	0.87	3.5	NA	1.0
	n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	100	100	100	100	100	NA	<2
15	Percent of Mixture (wt percent)	20	50	30	35	20	0	100
	Second Ethylene Polymer	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	None
20	Polymer Type	0.935	0.935	0.942	0.920	0.920	0.912	NA
	Density (g/cc)	1.0	1.0	0.05	1.0	1.0	1.0	NA
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	<2.0	<2.0	<2.0	<2.0	<2.0	2.3	NA
	n-Hexane Extractives (percent)							
25	Percent of Mixture (wt percent)	80	50	70	65	80	100	0
	Polymer Mixture or Single Polymer							
30	Density (g/cc)	0.925	0.917	0.926	0.903	0.912	0.912	0.920
	First/Second Polymer Density Differential (g/cc)	0.048	0.039	0.055	0.049	0.039	None	None
35	I ₂ (g/10 min)	0.9	1.1	-0.2	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.0
	n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	0.3	ND	0.9	11.8	1.2	2.3	<2.0
	Expected n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	21.6	NA	31.4	36.3	21.6	NA	NA
40	Percent Lower Than Expected Extractive Amount	98.4	NA	97.1	67.4	94.3	NA	NA
45	Vicat Softening Point (VSP) (°C)	113.15	95	109	64.6	99.05	96.1	108.7

ND denotes the measurement was not determined.
 NA denotes the measurement is not applicable.

[0112] As illustrated in Table 1, although the polyethylene mixtures of Examples 1-8 contain at least 20 weight percent of a homogeneously branched substantially linear ethylene polymer component (A) which was substantially fully soluble in hexane, the mixtures of the invention were characterized by a relatively low compositional hexane extractive level, that is, less than 4.5 weight percent. Table 1 also illustrates that the actual n-hexane extractive level of inventive mixtures was at least 30 percent and as high as 98 percent lower than the expected extractive amount for each mixture. While

not wishing to be bound by any particular theory, it is believed that the higher density, more crystalline ethylene polymer used in the invention as component (B) creates a tortuous path and, as such, significantly reduces the amount of n-hexane extractable material that would otherwise traverse and escape the polymer mixture matrix.

[0113] Further, the polymer mixtures of Examples 1-8 were characterized by a Vicat softening point greater than 75°C. Conversely, the Vicat softening point of Comparative Example C10 was too low for packaging applications requiring improved heat resistivity. Additionally, although the actual n-hexane extractive level of Comparative Example C10 was significantly lower than its expected n-hexane extractive amount, its actual n-hexane extractive level was still markedly higher (that is, from 2.7 to 39 times higher) than that of the preferred polymer mixtures of the invention. The deficiencies of Comparative Example C10 are thought to be due to the relatively low density (that is, 0.903 g/cc) of the mixture. As such, for film and coating applications (as opposed to molding applications), it is believed that where the density of the component (A) polymer is equal to or less than 0.870 g/cc, the density of the component (B) polymer should be greater than 0.920 g/cc (that is, the density differential between the first and second ethylene polymers should be greater than 0.049 g/cc) but still less than 0.942 g/cc.

[0114] The mixtures of Examples 1-8 and the single polymer compositions and mixtures of Comparative Examples C9-C13 were fabricated into a 2 mil (0.051 mm) thick monolayer blown (tubular) film at about 200°C melt temperature using a 2.5 inch (6.4 cm) diameter, 30:1 L/D Gloucester blown film line equipped with a 6 inch (15.2 cm) annular die. The monolayer blown films were evaluated for 1 percent and 2 percent secant modulus, Elmendorf tear, dart impact, and puncture resistance using the procedures described above. The results of the evaluation are set forth in Table 2.

Table 2

Example		1	2	3	4	5	6
Monolayer Film Performance Properties	2 percent Secant Modulus (MD) (psi) (MPa)	22,000 (152)	22,147 (153)	18,870 (130)	19,541 (135)	6,595 (45)	8,989 (62)
	1 percent Secant Modulus (MD) (psi) (MPa)	ND	ND	ND	21,522 (148)	7,627 (53)	10,421 (72)
	2 percent Secant Modulus (CD) (psi) (MPa)	26,000 (179)	22,033 (152)	24,590 (170)	21,140 (146)	7,052 (49)	9,391 (65)
	1 percent Secant Modulus (CD) (psi) (MPa)	ND	ND	ND	22,993 (159)	8,492 (59)	10,898 (75)
	Elmendorf Tear (Type A) (MD) (grams)	800	1,094	811	659	359	312
	Elmendorf Tear (Type A) (CD) (grams)	980	1,222	1,030	877	512	482
	Dart Impact (Type B) (grams)	512	646	850	698	>850	>850
	Puncture Resistance (ft-lbs/in ³) (kg-cm/cm ³)	300 (253)	259 (219)	320 (270)	312 (263)	255 (215)	254 (214)

ND denotes the measurement was not determined.

Table 2, Continued

Example		7	8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13
Monolayer Film Performance Properties	2 percent Secant Modulus (MD) (psi) (MPa)	33,355 (230)	ND	41,887 (289)	12,597 (87)	20,278 (140)	18,361 (127)	25,325 (175)
	1 percent Secant Modulus (MD) (psi) (MPa)	37,516 (259)	ND	46,514 (321)	14,299 (99)	22,470 (155)	21,176 (146)	29,275 (202)
	2 percent Secant Modulus (CD) (psi) (MPa)	36,440 (251)	ND	48,964 (338)	12,758 (88)	22,725 (157)	19,160 (132)	25,863 (178)
	1 percent Secant Modulus (CD) (psi) (MPa)	37,238 (257)	ND	52,433 (362)	14,953 (103)	25,597 (176)	21,511 (148)	28,005 (193)
	Elmendorf Tear (Type A) (MD) (grams)	579	670	330	1,155	645	765	427
	Elmendorf Tear (Type A) (CD) (grams)	891	900	907	1,414	794	912	749
	Dart Impact (Type B) (grams)	323	ND	330	0	430	800	270
	Puncture Resistance (ft-lbs/in ³) (kg-cm/cm ³)	193 (163)	290 (245)	142 (120)	213 (180)	292 (246)	142 (120)	176 (148)

ND denotes the measurement was not determined.

[0115] As illustrated in Table 2, the polymer mixtures of Examples 1-8 exhibited a controllable 2 percent secant modulus (MD) as low as 6,595 psi (45.5 MPa) in the case of Example 5 and as high as 33,355 psi (230 MPa) in the case of Inventive Example 7. Table 2 also illustrates that the polymer mixtures of Inventive Examples 1-8, as compared to Comparative Examples C9-C13, were characterized by an Elmendorf tear (MD) of at least 300 g, a Dart Impact (Type B) of at least 300 g, and a puncture resistance of at least 150 ft-lb/in³ (127 kg-cm/cm³), establishing additional criteria of a food packaging resin.

[0116] The mixtures of Inventive Examples 1-8 and the single polymer compositions and mixtures of Comparative Examples C9-C13 were fabricated into a 3.5 mil (0.089mm) thick coextruded film using a coextrusion blown film unit manufactured by Egan Machinery and equipped with two 30:1 L/D 2.5 inch (6.4 cm) diameter extruders, one 30:1 L/D 2 inch (5.1 cm) extruder and an 8 inch (20.3 cm) spiral mandrel annular die. The individual layers of the film were as follows: 1 mil (0.025 mm) nylon; 1 mil (0.025 mm) Primacor™ 1410 an ethylene-acrylic acid (EAA) copolymer available from The Dow Chemical Company; and 1.5 mil (0.038 mm) of Inventive Examples 1-8 or Comparative Examples C9-C13. The resultant coextruded films were evaluated for heat seal initiation temperature, hot tack initiation temperature, and ultimate hot tack strength. The results of the evaluation are set forth in Table 3.

Table 3

Example		1	2	3	4	5	6
Coextruded Film Performance Properties							
	Heat Seal Initiation Temperature (°C)	81	71	76	77	63	65
	Hot Tack Initiation Temperature (°C)	80	69	75	78	68	67
	Ultimate Hot Tack Strength N/in (N/cm)	7.3 (2.87)	7.2 (2.83)	11.8 (4.64)	7.4 (2.91)	7.1 (2.79)	7.9 (3.11)
	VSP - Heat Seal Initiation Temperature (°C)	10.9	23.6	15.9	21.3	13.1	11.2

Table 3, Continued

Example		7	8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13
Coextruded Film Performance Properties								
	Heat Seal Initiation Temperature (°C)	98	87	116	54	73	103	108
	Hot Tack Initiation Temperature (°C)	102	92	-110	48	80	108	109
	Ultimate Hot Tack Strength N/in (N/cm)	9.7 (3.82)	6.6 (2.60)	3.8 (1.48)	10.0 (3.94)	6.1 (2.40)	8.2 (3.23)	9.4 (3.70)
	VSP - Heat Seal Initiation Temperature (°C)	15.2	8.0	-7.0	10.6	26.1	-6.9	0.7

[0117] As illustrated in Table 3, the polymer mixtures of Examples 1-8 exhibited a heat seal initiation temperature of less than 100°C and as low as 63°C as in the case of Example 5, and a differential between the Vicat softening point of the polymer mixture and the heat seal initiation temperature of a 1.5 mil (0.038 mm) film layer fabricated from the polymer mixture of at least 8°C (as in the case of Examples 1-8), of at least 10°C (as in the case of Examples 1-7), of at least 15°C (as in the case of Examples 2-4, and 7), and of at least 20°C (as in the case of Examples 2 and 4). Comparative Examples C9, C12 and C13 all had heat seal and hot tack initiation temperatures that merely approximate their respective Vicat softening points. Table 3 also illustrates Comparative Example C11 was also characterized by a desirably low heat seal and hot tack initiation temperature and a desirably high differential between its Vicat softening point and its heat seal initiation temperature.

[0118] In another evaluation, the heat seal initiation temperatures of the mixtures and single polymer compositions (as well as other single composition illustrated in Table 4 and designated Comparative Examples C14-C19) were plotted as function of the Vicat softening point for the material. The individual relationships were subjected to first and second order linear regression analysis using Cricket Graph computer software Version 1.3 supplied commercially by Cricket Software Company to establish an equation for the respective relationships. FIG. 2 illustrates the resulting equations and that, desirably, the heat seal initiation temperature of a given Inventive mixture was at least 13 percent lower in the case of Examples 1-8, at least 20 percent lower in the case of Examples 1-6 and 8, and at least 25 percent lower in the case of Examples 2-6 than a heterogeneously linear polymer having essentially the same Vicat softening point.

Table 4**Heterogeneous Linear Ethylene
Polymers**

Comparative Example	Density (g/cc)	Melt Index (g/10 minutes)	Vicat Softening Point (°C)	Heat Seal Initiation Temperature (°C)	Hot Tack Initiation Temperature (°C)	Vicat - Heat Seal Initiation
C12	0.912	1.0	96	103	108	-7
C14	0.935	1.1	119	116	117	3
C15	0.920	1.0	105	111	109	-6
C16	0.905	0.80	83	87	103	-4

**Substantially Linear
Ethylene Polymers**

Comparative Example	Density (g/cc)	Melt Index (g/10 min.)	Vicat Softening Point (°C)	Heat Seal Initiation Temperature (°C)	Hot Tack Initiation Temperature (°C)	Vicat - Heat Seal Initiation
C13	0.920	1.0	108.7	108	109	0.7
C17	0.908	1.0	ND	91	99	NA
C18	0.902	1.0	89	83	88	6
C19	0.895	1.3	73	76	85	-3

ND denotes the measurement was not determined

NA denotes the measurement or value was not applicable.

Table 4, Continued

Ethylene Vinyl Acetate (EVA)
Copolymers

Comparative Example	Percent Vinyl Acetate	Melt Index (g/10 min.)	Vicat Softening Point (°C)	Heat Seal Initiation Temperature (°C)	Hot Tack Initiation Temperature (°C)	Vicat - Heat Seal Initiation
C20	12	0	79	86	None (strength was below the 1.6 N/cm threshold)	-7
C21	18	0.80	65	80	None (strength was below the 1.6 N/cm threshold)	-15

[0119] In another evaluation, the hot tack initiation temperatures of the mixtures and single polymer compositions (as well as other single polymer compositions illustrated in Table 4 and designated Comparative Examples C14-C19) were plotted as function of the density and Vicat softening point for the material. In the same fashion as above, these individual relationships were subjected to first and second order linear regression analysis to establish an equation for the corresponding relationship. FIG. 3 and 4 illustrate the resulting equations and that, desirably, the hot tack initiation temperature of a given inventive mixture was at least 10 percent lower in the case of Examples 1-8, at least 20 percent lower in the case of Examples 1-6, and at least 30 percent lower in the case of Examples 2-6 than a heterogeneously linear polymer having essentially the same density or Vicat softening point.

[0120] The low heat seal and hot tack initiation temperatures of the Inventive mixtures permits industrial fabricators to increase productivity by making more seals per unit time and, as such, fabricating more bags, pouches, and other packages and containers that are produced by creating heat seals. By having Vicat softening points several degrees higher than their respective heat seal initiation temperatures, the inventive polymer mixtures will better maintain seal integrity during use in packaging applications involving high temperatures (for example, about 45°C) such as hot-fill packaging where items are packaged hot and dropped onto bottom seals, cook-in applications and boil-in-bag applications.

[0121] Table 3 further illustrates that the ultimate hot tack strength of Examples 1-8 was greater than or equal to 6.5 N/in. (2.56 N/cm) and was as high as 11.8 N/in (4.65 N/cm) in the case of Example 3. The ultimate hot strength of the comparative mixtures, including C11 which is exemplary of the mixture disclosed by Shibata et al. in U.S. Patent 4,429,079, were all less than 6.5 N/in (2.56 N/cm). The high ultimate hot tack strength of the inventive mixture is particularly important in vertical form/fill/seal packaging applications where the items to be packaged are dropped into the package and onto the bottom hot tack seal immediately after the seal is formed. High hot tack strength insures the bottom seal will not rupture during loading of the items and, as such, will help eliminate leakers and spillage of the items.

[0122] In another evaluation, Inventive Example 2 was evaluated for its machinability performance when processed through automated converting and packaging equipment. Good "machinability", as the term is used herein, refers to the ability to convert film into non-filled packages on high speed packaging equipment without generating packages that are outside of the desired package specification or having premature equipment shutdowns.

[0123] Machinability was determined by first fabricating from Inventive Example 2 a 2.0 mil (0.051 mm) thick monolayer film using the Gloucester blown film unit described above. Then the film was run through a Hayssen Ultima Super CMB Vertical Form/Fill/Seal (VFFS) machine for at least 5 minutes to determine whether 7 inch wide x 9.5 inch long (17.8 cm wide x 24.1 cm long) pouches could be produced at a rate of 25 pouches/minute and at a higher rate of 50 pouches/minute. In this evaluation, the film fabricated from Inventive Example 2 showed good machinability. Non-filled pouches within the desired dimensional specification were prepared at the rates of 25 and 50/minute without any

equipment shutdowns.

[0124] For purposes of comparison, Comparative Example 21, which was an ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA) copolymer containing 18 weight percent vinyl acetate, was also evaluated for VFFS non-filled packaging machinability. However, Comparative Example 21 experienced continuous equipment interruptions and shutdowns and could not be processed at a packaging speed as low as 20 non-filled pouches per minute in this evaluation. The poor performance of Comparative Example 21 was attributable to its tackiness and low modulus (poor dimensional stability) which results in the film excessively necking-down and dragging on the forming tube of the VFFS unit.

[0125] In another evaluation, Inventive Example 2 was evaluated for its cook-in performance by procedures pursuant to those disclosed in U.S. Patent 4,469,742. In this evaluation, a 3.5 mil (0.089 mm) thick coextruded film consisting of 1.5 mils (0.038 mm) of nylon/1.0 mil (0.025mm) Primacor™ 1410/1.5 mils (0.038 mm) of Inventive Example 2 was fabricated using the Egan coextrusion line described above. The nylon material, as for all other nylon/adhesive/sealant film structures used and disclosed herein, was Capron Xtraform™ 1590F Nylon 6/6, 6 copolymer supplied commercially by Allied Chemical Company. The Hayssen VFFS unit described above was also used in combination with a Pro/Fill 3000 Liquid Filler unit in this evaluation. The temperature of the sealing bars and platen for making bottom, top and side fin seals to prepare the pouches was set at 250°F (121°C). Using the coextruded film, 7 inch wide x 9.5 inch long (17.8 cm wide x 24.1 cm long) pouches were prepared and filled with 1,000 milliliters of water on the VFFS unit at a rate of 15 filled pouches per minute. Five water filled and heat sealed pouches were collected and placed into a large water-tight pan. The pan was then filled with water, covered with a suitable lid and placed in a Blue M forced-air convection oven and permitted to stand for 17 hours at 85°C. After 17 hours of oven time, the five pouches were removed from the oven and allowed to cool to ambient and inspected for seal integrity. In this evaluation, no leakers due to seal ruptures, delamination or cracking were detected. All five pouches fabricated from Inventive Example 2 passed this cook-in evaluation in accordance to criteria provided in U.S. Patent 4,469,742.

[0126] In another evaluation, a polymer mixture designated Inventive Example 22 was prepared by tumble blending, as component (A), 22 percent by weight of the total mixture of a substantially linear ethylene/1-octene copolymer having a density of 0.870 g/cc and produced according to techniques described in U.S. Patent 5,272,236 and, as component (B), 78 percent by weight of the total mixture of a heterogeneously branched ethylene/1-octene copolymer having a density of 0.935 g/cc and produced using a solution polymerization process and a Ziegler-type titanium catalyst. The mixture was then melt mixed on a 30 mm Werner-Pfleider ZSK co-rotating, twin screw extruder and pelletized. The mixture, which was characterized as having a density of 0.920 g/cc, was then extruded into 200 mil (51 mm) thick sheet using a conventional cast film extruder unit equipped with a slot die and the melt temperature set at 415°F (213°C) and the chill roll set at 67°F (19°C). The resulting extruded sheet was then cut into four 2 inch x 2 inch (5.1 cm x 5.1 cm) sheets and biaxially stretched individually using a T.M. Long laboratory stretching frame. The sheets were stretched to a thickness of 1 mil (0.025 mm) using the various settings shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Stretch Temperature Setting	245°F (118°C), top and bottom platens
Preheat Time	10 minutes
Stretch Rate	5 in/min. (12.7 cm/min.) in both the machine and traverse directions
Stretch Mode	Simultaneous Stretching
Stretch Ratio	4.5 x 4.5

[0127] After the biaxial stretching operation, the sheets were tested for free shrinkage at 250°F (121°C) in accordance with ASTM D2732 and averaged to determine the total shrink response. The average free shrinkage of sheet fabricated from Inventive Example 22 measured 27 percent in the machine direction and 25 percent in the traverse direction. The mixture also had an orientation temperature range of at least 11°C which was broader than that of typical homogeneously branched ethylene polymers. As such, Inventive Examples 1-8 and 22 are believed to be well-suited for use in fabricating biaxially oriented films for use in such applications as, for example, barrier shrink packaging of primal and subprimal meat.

[0128] In an injection molding evaluation, Inventive Examples 23-26 and Comparative Examples C29-C30 were prepared by dry blending followed by melt mixing at about 149°C in a 1 inch (2.5 cm) diameter 24:1 L/D MPM extruder. Table 6 provides a description of the component polymers as well the component weight percentages expressed as "percent of mixture". The melt extrusion conditions used in preparing Inventive Examples 23-26 and Comparative

Examples C29-C30 were shown in Table 7. Inventive Examples 27 and 28 were prepared by operating two polymerization reactors sequentially in a manner similar to that described for Example 1, utilizing reactor splits (conversion and production rates) that corresponded to the percent of mixture in Table 6.

[0129] Inventive Examples 23-28 were also compared to Comparative Examples C32 and C33 which were single-reactor homogeneously branched and single-reactor heterogeneously branched resins, respectively. Comparative Example C32 was an experimental substantially linear ethylene polymer resin produced according to the disclosure by Lai et al. in U.S. Patent 5,272,236 and U.S. Patent 5,278,272. Comparative Example C33 was a molding grade resin supplied by The Dow Chemical Company under the designation of Dowlex™ 2500.

Table 6

Example		23	24	25	26	27	28
First Ethylene Polymer	Polymer Type	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear
	Density (g/cc)	0.870	0.886	0.870	0.886	0.870	0.865
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	30.0	30	30	30	3.0	8.0
	n-Hexane Extractives	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Percent of Mixture (wt percent)	38	50	34	45	37	38
Second Ethylene Polymer	Polymer Type	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear
	Density (g/cc)	0.940	0.940	0.935	0.935	0.941	0.946
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	27	27	40	40	58	40
	n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2
	Percent of Mixture (wt percent)	62	50	66	55	63	62
Polymer Mixture	Density (g/cc)	0.9133	0.9132	0.9128	0.9136	0.9135	0.9137
	First/Second Polymer Density Differential (g/cc)	0.070	0.054	0.065	0.049	0.071	0.073
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	27.12	24.68	38.85	34.00	19.48	21.82
	n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	9.32	6.64	10.27	6.27	4.53	16.4

Table 6, Continued

Example		C29	C30	C32	C33
First Ethylene Polymer	Polymer Type	Substantially Linear	Heterogeneously Branched Linear	Substantially Linear	None
	Density (g/cc)	0.940	0.935	0.913	NA
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	27	40	30	NA
	n-Hexane Extractives	<2	<2	<2	NA
	Percent of Mixture (wt percent)	26	30	100	NA
Second Ethylene Polymer	Polymer Type	Substantially Linear	Substantially Linear	None	Heterogeneously Branched Linear
	Density (g/cc)	0.903	0.9027	NA	0.9269
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	30	30	NA	60.08
	n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	<2	<2	NA	<2
	Percent of Mixture (wt percent)	74	70	NA	100
Polymer Mixture	Density (g/cc)	0.9137	0.9121	0.913	0.927
	Component Density Differential (g/cc)	0.037	0.032	NA	NA
	I ₂ (g/10 min)	26.24	31.00	30.00	60.08
	n-Hexane Extractives (percent)	2.09	2.42	<2	<2

NA denotes the measurement is not applicable.

Table 7

Example	Zone 1 Temp. (Actual/Set) (°F) (°C)	Zone 2 Temp. (Actual/Set) (°F) (°C)	Die Temp. (Actual/Set) (°F) (°C)	Melt Temp. (°F) (°C)	Extruder RPM	Extruder Pressure (psi) (MPa)
23	299/300 (148/149)	309/300 (154/149)	296/300 (147/149)	290 143	190	440 3.0
24	300/300 (149/149)	301/300 (149/149)	301/300 (149/149)	280 138	190	460 3.2
25	300/300 (149/149)	300/300 (149/149)	300/300 (149/149)	290 143	190	395 2.7
26	301/300 (149/149)	301/300 (149/149)	301/300 (149/149)	280 138	190	415 2.9
C29	300/300 (149/149)	301/300 (149/149)	300/300 (149/149)	290 143	190	450 3.1

Table 7 (continued)

Example	Zone 1 T mp. (Actual/Set) (°F) (°C)	Zone 2 Temp. (Actual/Set) (°F) (°C)	Die Temp. (Actual/Set) (°F) (°C)	Melt Temp. (°F) (°C)	Extruder RPM	Extruder Pressure (psi) (MPa)
C30	301/300 (149/149)	300/300 (149/149)	300/300 (149/149)	279 137	190	440 3.0
C33	300/300 (149/149)	301/300 (149/149)	301/300 (149/149)	276 136	190	300 2.1

[0130] Inventive Examples 23-28 and Comparative Examples C29-C30 and C33 were all injection molded at 200°C using a 150-ton DeMag injection molding machine equipped with reciprocating screw and a six-cavity ASTM plaque mold to produce 6 x 1/2 x 1/8 inch (15.2 x 1.3 x 0.3 cm) flex bars. Although the melt index of the Inventive Example and Comparative Example polymer mixtures was lower than the Dowlex™ 2500 resin (Comparative Example C33), all polymer mixtures showed good molding characteristics such as good flowability and mold filling capability as well as short cycle times. Table 8 sets forth the physical properties of the injection molded parts. Flexural modulus determination were performed in accordance with ASTM D790 test methods.

Table 8

Example	Melt Index (g/10 min)	I_{10}/I_2	Density (g/cc)	Flexural Modulus (psi) (MPa)
23	27.12	6.29	0.9133	22,921 (158)
24	24.68	6.46	0.9132	20,430 (141)
25	38.85	7.07	0.9128	19,354 (133)
26	34.00	7.02	0.9136	20,821 (144)
27	19.48	7.69	0.9135	23,711 (163)
28	21.82	6.75	0.9137	24,486 (169)
C29	26.24	6.45	0.9137	17,210 (119)
C30	31.00	6.49	0.9121	17,249 (119)
C32	30.00	ND	0.9130	17,259 (119)
C33	60.08	6.85	0.9269	36,101 (249)
ND denotes the measurement was not determined.				

[0131] As expected, due to the lower final density of the mixtures (0.913 g/cc) compared to the density of Comparative Example C33 (0.927 g/cc), the flexural modulus of the injection molded flex bars fabricated from the various polymer mixtures was significantly lower (32 - 52 percent) than the higher density LLDPE resin (Comparative Example C33).

[0132] The injection molded parts were also tested for heat resistance to low-frequency microwave radiation. For microwave resistance testing, Inventive Examples 23-28 and Comparative Examples C29-C33 were injection molded at 200°C into 3 inch (7.6 cm) diameter, 125 mil (0.3 cm) thick circular disks using the DeMag molder described above and allowed to cool to an ambient temperature. The disks were tested individually by placing each disk over a 2 inch (5.1 cm) diameter, 12 ounce (354 cc) microwave-resistant polypropylene container and filled with about 6 ounces (177 cc) of commercial spaghetti sauce, that is, Ragu® chunky garden style spaghetti sauce. Each disk and container was then placed into a General Electric Spacesaver® microwave for 5 minutes at the highest temperature setting. The GE

Spacesaver microwave was a typical low-frequency consumer microwave unit. After 5 minutes in the microwave, the disks were removed, allowed to cool to an ambient temperature and then rinsed with cool running tap water. During the rinse, the disks were carefully held with their length parallel to the stream of tap water. The amount of distortion for each disk was measured as warpage in centimeters by laying the disk on a flat horizontal surface and determining the distance from the flat surface to the apex (highest point) of the warpage. Table 9 shows the microwave heat resistance or warp resistance results.

[0133] To further define the heat resistance of these novel mixtures, heat sag performance testing was also performed. Injection molded flex bars were prepared using the DeMag molder described above. The edge configuration of individual bars were recorded (printed) by firmly placing a bar edge on a rubber stamp ink pad and stamping the configuration on a sheet of plain paper. After the edge configurations were recorded, five bars were then affixed to a metal rack having five spring clamps aligned vertically and spaced 3 cm apart. The bars were loaded into individual spring clamps (one bar per clamp) such that a 1/4 inch (0.64 cm) of the bar length was within the jaws of the clamp and the remaining 5-3/4 inch (14.6 cm) length was allowed to remain suspended free of any obstructions or support. The rack containing the suspended flex bars was then placed into a Blue M forced-air convection oven set at 100°C for 10 minutes. After the 10 minute period, the rack was removed from oven and allowed to cool to an ambient temperature. Each bar edge was then inked again with the inking pad and stamped on the paper adjacent to its previous configuration print. This second print was done in such a manner that the end of the bar that was clamped was aligned to the left of the previous edge print. Then, from the paper displaying the two prints, the maximum distance between inner surfaces of the edge prints was measured in millimeters and recorded. Fig. 5 graphically illustrates the proper alignment of the bar prints for heat sag performance determinations. The measurement was repeated for each of the five bars, averaged and reported as heat sag performance for the Example. The heat sag performance of the various materials is also summarized in Table 9. Inventive Examples 23-28 all showed good heat sag resistance in that lower heat sag values were taken as characteristic of improved heat resistance performance. Surprisingly, although Inventive Examples 23-28 had a relatively low flexural modulus as set forth in Table 8, Table 9 indicates these novel mixtures had excellent heat resistance.

Table 9

Example	Microwave Warp Distortion (cm)	Heat Sag (cm)
23	0.16±0.03	1.43±0.14
24	0.54±0.05	2.61±0.27
25	0.73±0.13	2.06±0.14
26	0.65±0.13	3.14±0.20
27	ND	1.62 ±0.29
28	ND	1.29±0.01
C29	0.84±0.05	4.59±0.31
C30	0.85±0.04	5.40±0.22
C32	ND	3.84±0.19
C33	0.83±0.12	1.13±0.19

ND denotes measurement was not determined.

[0134] The residual crystallinity of the several Examples and Comparative Examples at elevated temperatures (100 and 110°C) was measured by differential scanning calorimetry (DSC). The residual portion of the polymer mixtures and single-reactor resins above 100°C actually quantified is illustrated graphically in FIG. 6. The percent residual crystallinity was taken from first heat determinations and calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{percent residual crystallinity} = (\text{heat of fusion} + 292 \text{ J/cc}) \times \text{percent area above 100 or 110}^\circ\text{C}$$

[0135] The DSC results are shown in Tables 10 and 11 and are also graphically illustrated in FIG. 1 for various polymer mixtures and single-reactor polymers. From regression analysis utilizing the Cricket Graph software described above, inventive mixtures were determined to have a percent residual crystallinity, PRC, as defined by the equation:

$$\text{PRC} \geq 6.4363 \times 10^{-4} (\rho) - 3.4701 \times 10^{-4} (\rho)^2 - 2.9808 \times 10^{-4},$$

where ρ is the density of the polymer mixture in grams/cubic centimeters.

Table 10

Example	Percent Residual Crystallinity above 100°C	Percent Residual Crystallinity above 110°C
5	1.8	0.3
6	9.2	5.9
7	37.8	31.7
9	37.2	32.5
23	33.3	29.8
24	28.2	24.7
25	28.9	22.9
26	27.2	17.4
27	30.2	24.8
28	32.9	29.3
C29	20.4	16.5
C30	14.5	10.0
C31	21.6	14.6
C33	32.7	22.1

Table 11

Heterogeneous Linear Ethylene Polymers				
Comparative Example	Density (g/cc)	Melt Index (g/10 min.)	Percent Residual Crystallinity at 100°C	Percent Residual Crystallinity at 110°C
C12	0.912	1.0	19.3	7.4
C14	0.935	1.1	42.3	33.7
C15	0.920	1.0	27.5	18.3
C16	0.905	0.8	15.2	10.4
C33	0.927	60.1	32.7	22.1
Substantially Linear Ethylene Polymers				
Comparative Example	Density (g/cc)	Melt Index (g/10 minutes)	Percent Residual Crystallinity at 100°C	Percent Residual Crystallinity at 110°C
C13	0.920	1.0	29.1	15.0
C32	0.913	29.3	15.8	0.3
C34	0.903	30.0	1.9	0
C35	0.940	27.0	50.4	44.5
C36	0.902	3.6	4.1	0
C37	0.934	2.6	46.9	41.0
C38	0.937	2.2	49.1	43.6

[0136] Further, FIG. 1 also shows that for inventive polymer mixtures having a density in the range of 0.900 to 0.930 g/cc, particularly in the range of 0.903 to 0.928 g/cc showed a significantly higher percent residual crystallinity at 100°C than single-reactor, non-mixed polymers having essentially the same density. As compared to a linear ethylene polymers having essentially the same density in the range of 0.903-0.928 g/cc, Inventive Examples 7, 23, 25-28 had at

least 17.5 percent higher, Examples 23, 25-28 have at least 35 percent higher, and Examples 23 and 28 have at least 50 percent higher percent residual crystallinities. As compared to substantially linear ethylene polymers which were substantially amorphous at lower densities, Inventive Examples 7, 23, 25-28 all showed dramatically higher percent residual crystallinities.

[0137] While a higher crystallinity may explain improved heat resistance and/or higher Vicat softening points of the Examples, it is completely unexpected that materials with higher crystallinities also show lower flexural moduli or lower heat seal and hot tack initiation temperatures.

Claims

1. A polymer mixture comprising

(A) from 15 to 60 weight percent, based on the total weight of the mixture, of at least one first ethylene polymer which is a substantially linear ethylene polymer having 0.01 to 3 long chain branches /1000 carbons, and having a density in the range of 0.850 to 0.920 g/cc, wherein the substantially linear ethylene polymer is further characterized as having

i. a melt flow ratio, $I_{10}/I_2 \geq 5.63$,

ii. a molecular weight distribution, M_w/M_n , as determined by gel permeation chromatography and defined by the equation: $(M_w/M_n) \leq (I_{10}/I_2) - 4.63$,

iii. a gas extrusion rheology such that the critical shear rate at onset of surface melt fracture for the substantially linear ethylene polymer is at least 50 percent greater than the critical shear rate at the onset of surface melt fracture for a linear ethylene polymer, wherein the substantially linear ethylene polymer and the linear ethylene polymer comprise the same comonomer or comonomers, the linear ethylene polymer has an I_2 , M_w/M_n and density within ten percent of the substantially linear ethylene polymer and wherein the respective critical shear rates of the substantially linear ethylene polymer and the linear ethylene polymer are measured at the same melt temperature using a gas extrusion rheometer, wherein I_2 and I_{10} are measured according to ASTM D-1238, condition 190°C/2.16 kg and condition 190°C /10kg respectively, and

iv. a single differential scanning calorimetry, DSC, melting peak between -30 and 150°C; and

(B) from 40 to 85 weight percent, based on the total weight of the mixture, of at least one second ethylene polymer which is a homogeneously branched, heterogeneously branched linear, or high density ethylene polymer having a density between 0.890 and 0.942 g/cc;

wherein the polymer mixture is characterized as having a density of from 0.890 to 0.930 g/cc, a differential between the densities of the first ethylene polymer and the second ethylene polymer of at least 0.015 g/cc, and a Vicat softening point of at least 75°C (measured according to ASTM D-1525 on 0.051 mm films); and wherein

(a) a 0.038 mm thick coextruded sealant layer fabricated from the polymer mixture has a heat seal initiation temperature equal to or less than 100°C as measured according to the description and an ultimate hot tack strength of at least 2.56 N/cm as measured according to the description, and

(b) the Vicat softening point of the polymer mixture is more than 6°C higher than the heat seal initiation temperature of the coextruded sealant layer.

2. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the substantially linear ethylene polymer has at least 0.1 long chain branch/1000 carbons.

3. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the substantially linear ethylene polymer has at least 0.3 long chain branch/1000 carbons.

4. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the second ethylene polymer, Component (B), is a heterogeneously branched linear ethylene polymer or a substantially linear ethylene polymer having 0.01 to 3 long chain branches/1000 carbons.

5. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the first ethylene polymer, Component (A), or the second ethylene polymer, Component (B), is an interpolymer of ethylene and at least one alpha-olefin selected from the

group consisting of 1-propylene, 1-butene, 1-isobutylene, 1-hexene, 4-methyl-1-pentene, 1-pentene, 1-heptene and 1-octene.

- 5 6. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the first ethylene polymer, Component (A), or the second ethylene polymer, Component (B), is a copolymer of ethylene and 1-octene.
7. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the mixture is prepared by mixing the first ethylene polymer and the second ethylene polymer together by at least one of the methods selected from the group consisting of melt mixing extrusion, dry blending, sequential operation of at least two polymerization reactors and parallel operation of at least two polymerization reactors.
8. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein at least one of the first ethylene polymer of Component (A) and the second ethylene polymer of Component (B) is **characterized by** a melt index of 0.1 to 75 g/10 min, measured according to ASTM D-1238, condition 190°C/2.16kg.
9. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the mixture has a compositional hexane extractive level of less than 15 weight percent based on the total weight of the mixture.
10. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the mixture has a compositional hexane extractive level of less than 10 weight percent based on the total weight of the mixture.
11. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the mixture has a compositional hexane extractive level of less than 6 weight percent based on the total weight of the mixture.
12. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the Vicat softening point of the polymer mixture is at least 8°C higher than the heat seal initiation temperature of the film sealant layer.
13. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the Vicat softening point of the polymer mixture is at least 10°C higher than the heat seal initiation temperature of the film sealant layer.
14. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the heat seal initiation temperature of the film sealant layer is less than 90°C.
15. The polymer mixture of Claim 1, wherein the heat seal initiation temperature of the film sealant layer is less than 85°C.
16. Use of the polymer mixture of Claim 1 to fabricate a film, film layer, coating or molded article.
17. The use of Claim 16 wherein the film is a sealant layer or shrink layer in a packaging structure.
18. The use of Claim 17, wherein the packaging structure is a multilayer film structure.
19. The use of Claim 16 for a layer in a multilayer film structure.
20. The use of Claim 19, wherein the multilayer film structure is at least partly fabricated by a coextrusion technique.
21. The use of Claim 19, wherein the multilayer film structure is a cook-in package, hot-fill package, flowable material pouch, shrink film or barrier shrink film.
22. The use of Claim 16, wherein the molded article is in the form of a storage container.
23. The use of Claim 22, wherein the molded article is in the form of a storage container lid.
24. The use of Claim 22, wherein the molded article is fabricated by at least one of the techniques from the group consisting of injection molding, blow molding, compression molding, rotomolding and injection blow molding.
25. The use of Claim 22, wherein the molded article is at least partly fabricated by injection molding.

Patentanspruch

1. Polymermischung, umfassend:

5 (A) von 15 bis 60 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das Gesamtgewicht der Mischung, von wenigstens einem ersten Ethylenpolymeren, das ein im wesentlichen lineares Ethylenpolymeres ist, das 0,01 bis 3 Langkettenverzweigungen/1000 Kohlenstoffen hat und das eine Dichte im dem Bereich von 0,850 bis 0,920 g/cm³ hat, worin das im wesentliche lineare Ethylenpolymere weiter **dadurch gekennzeichnet ist, daß** es hat:

- 10 i. eine Schmelzfließverhältnis, $I_{10}/I_2 \geq 5$, 63;
ii. eine Molekulargewichtsverteilung, M_w/M_n , bestimmt durch Gelpermeationschromatographie und definiert durch die Gleichung:

15
$$(M_w/M_n) \leq (I_{10}/I_2) - 4, 63,$$

- 20 iii. eine solche Gasextrusionsrheologie, daß die kritische Scherrate beim Beginn von Oberflächenschmelzbruch für das im wesentliche lineare Ethylenpolymere wenigstens 50% größer ist als die kritische Scherrate beim Beginn von Oberflächenschmelzbruch für ein lineares Ethylenpolymeres, worin das im wesentlichen lineare Ethylenpolymere und das lineare Ethylenpolymere dasselbe Comonomere oder dieselben Comonomeren umfassen, das lineare Ethylenpolymere ein I_2 , M_w/M_n und eine Dichte innerhalb 10% des im wesentlichen linearen Ethylenpolymeren hat, und worin die jeweiligen kritischen Scherraten des im wesentlichen linearen Ethylenpolymeren und des linearen Ethylenpolymeren bei derselben Schmelztemperatur unter Verwendung eines Gasextrusionsrheometers gemessen werden, wobei I_2 und I_{10} gemäß
25 ASTM D-1238, Bedingung 190°C/2,16 kg bzw. 190°C/10 kg, gemessen werden,
iv. einen einzigen Schmelzpeak bei Differentialabtauskalorimetrie, DSC, zwischen -30 und 150°C; und

30 (B) von 40 bis 85 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das Gesamtgewicht der Mischung, von wenigstens einem zweiten Ethylenpolymeren, das ein homogen verzweigtes, heterogen verzweigtes, lineares Ethylenpolymeres oder ein Ethylenpolymeres mit hoher Dichte ist, das eine Dichte zwischen 0,890 und 0,942 g/cm³ hat,

35 worin die Polymermischung **dadurch gekennzeichnet ist, daß** sie eine Dichte von 0,890 bis 0,930 g/cm³, einen Unterschied zwischen der Dichte des ersten Ethylenpolymeren und des zweiten Ethylenpolymeren von wenigstens 0,015g g/cm³ und einen Vicat-Erweichungspunkt von wenigstens 75°C (gemessen gemäß ASTM D-1525 an 0,051 mm Folien) hat, und worin:

- 40 (a) eine coextrudierte Siegelschicht von 0,038 mm Dicke, hergestellt aus der Polymermischung, eine Wärmesiegel-Initiierungstemperatur gleich oder geringer als 100°C, gemessen entsprechend der Beschreibung, und eine End-Heißklebefestigkeit, gemessen entsprechend der Beschreibung, von wenigstens 2,56 N/cm hat, und
(b) der Vicat-Erweichungspunkt der Polymermischung mehr als 6°C höher ist als die Wärmesiegel-Initiierungstemperatur der coextrudierten Siegelschicht.

45 2. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher das im wesentlichen lineare Ethylenpolymere wenigstens 0,1 Langkettenverzweigungen/1000 Kohlenstoffe hat.

3. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher das im wesentlichen lineare Ethylenpolymere wenigstens 0,3 Langkettenverzweigungen/1000 Kohlenstoffe hat.

50 4. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher das zweite Ethylenpolymere, Komponente (B), ein heterogen verzweigtes lineares Ethylenpolymeres oder ein im wesentlichen lineares Ethylenpolymeres, das 0,01 bis 3 Langkettenverzweigungen/1000 Kohlenstoffe hat, ist.

55 5. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher wenigstens eines des ersten Ethylenpolymeren, Komponente (A), oder des zweiten Ethylenpolymeren, Komponente (B), ein Copolymeres von Ethylen und wenigstens einem alpha-Olefin, ausgewählt aus der aus 1-Propylen, 1-Buten, 1-Isobutyl, 1-Hexen, 4-Methyl-1-penten, 1-Penten, 1-Hepten und 1-Octen bestehenden Gruppe, ist.

6. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher wenigstens eines des ersten Ethylenpolymeren, Komponente

(A), oder des zweiten Ethylenpolymeren, Komponente (B), ein Copolymeres von Ethylen und 1-Octen ist.

7. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher die Mischung durch Zusammenmischen des ersten Ethylenpolymeren und des zweiten Ethylenpolymeren durch wenigstens ein Verfahren, ausgewählt aus der aus Schmelzmischextrusion, Trocknmischen, sequentiellen Betrieb von wenigstens zwei Polymerisationsreaktoren und parallelen Betrieb von wenigstens zwei Polymerisationsreaktoren bestehenden Gruppe, hergestellt ist.
8. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher wenigstens eines des ersten Ethylenpolymeren von Komponente (A) und des zweiten Ethylenpolymeren von Komponente (B) **gekennzeichnet ist durch** einen Schmelzindex von 0,1 bis 75 g/10 min, gemessen gemäß ASTM D-1238, Bedingung 190°C/2,16 kg.
9. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher die Mischung einen Hexanextraktionswert der Zusammensetzung von weniger als 15 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das Gesamtgewicht der Mischung, hat.
10. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher die Mischung einen Hexanextraktionswert der Zusammensetzung von weniger als 10 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das Gesamtgewicht der Mischung, hat.
11. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher die Mischung einen Hexanextraktionswert der Zusammensetzung von weniger als 6 Gew.-%, bezogen auf das Gesamtgewicht der Mischung, hat.
12. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher der Vicat-Erweichungspunkt der Polymermischung wenigstens 8°C höher als die Wärmesiegel-Initiierungstemperatur der Foliensiegelschicht ist.
13. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher der Vicat-Erweichungspunkt der Polymermischung wenigstens 10°C höher als die Wärmesiegel-Initiierungstemperatur der Foliensiegelschicht ist.
14. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher die Wärmesiegel-Initiierungstemperatur der Foliensiegelschicht geringer als 90°C ist.
15. Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1, bei welcher die Wärmesiegel-Initiierungstemperatur der Foliensiegelschicht geringer als 85°C ist.
16. Verwendung der Polymermischung nach Anspruch 1 zur Herstellung einer Folie/eines Films, einer Folienschicht, eines Überzuges oder eines Formgegenstandes.
17. Verwendung nach Anspruch 16, bei welcher der Film eine Siegelschicht oder Schrumpfschicht in einer Verpackungsstruktur ist.
18. Verwendung nach Anspruch 17, bei welcher die Verpackungsstruktur eine Mehrschicht-Folienstruktur ist.
19. Verwendung nach Anspruch 16 für eine Schicht in einer Mehrschicht-Folienstruktur.
20. Verwendung nach Anspruch 19, bei welcher die Mehrschicht-Folienstruktur wenigstens teilweise mittels einer Coextrusionstechnik hergestellt ist.
21. Verwendung nach Anspruch 19, bei welcher die Mehrschicht-Folienstruktur eine Kochverpackung, eine Heißfüllverpackung, ein Beutel für fließfähiges Material, eine Schrumpffolie oder eine Sperr-Schrumpffolie ist.
22. Verwendung nach Anspruch 16, bei welcher der geformte Gegenstand in der Form eines Aufbewahrungsbehälters vorliegt.
23. Verwendung nach Anspruch 22, bei welcher der geformte Gegenstand in der Form eines Deckels eines Aufbewahrungsbehälters vorliegt.
24. Verwendung nach Anspruch 22, bei welcher der geformte Gegenstand durch wenigstens eine der Arbeitstechniken aus der Gruppe hergestellt ist, die aus Spritzgießen, Blasformen, Pressformen, Rotationsformen und Injektionsblasformen besteht.

25. Verwendung nach Anspruch 22, bei welcher der geformte Gegenstand wenigstens teilweise durch Spritzgießen hergestellt ist.

5 Revendications

1. Mélange de polymères, qui comprend

10 (A) 15 à 60% en poids, par rapport au poids total du mélange, d'au moins un premier polymère d'éthylène qui est un polymère d'éthylène pratiquement linéaire, ayant 0,01 à 3 ramifications à longue chaîne pour 1000 atomes de carbone, et ayant une masse volumique comprise dans l'intervalle allant de 0,850 à 0,920 g/cm³, ledit polymère d'éthylène pratiquement linéaire étant en outre **caractérisé en ce qu'il présente** :

- 15 (i) un rapport des indices de fluidité à l'état fondu, $I_{10}/I_2 \geq 5,63$,
- (ii) un indice de polymolécularité M_p/M_n , déterminé par chromatographie par perméation de gel, qui vérifie la relation $(M_p/M_n) \leq (I_{10}/I_2) - 4,63$,
- (iii) un comportement rhéologique lors de l'extrusion sous pression gazeuse, tel que la vitesse de cisaillement critique au début de la fracture de la masse fondue en surface est pour le polymère d'éthylène pratiquement linéaire supérieur d'au moins 50% à la vitesse de cisaillement critique au début de la fracture de la masse fondue en surface pour un polymère d'éthylène linéaire, le polymère d'éthylène pratiquement linéaire et le polymère d'éthylène linéaire comprenant le même comonomère ou les mêmes comonomères, le polymère d'éthylène linéaire ayant un I_2 , un rapport M_p/M_n et une masse volumique s'écartant de moins de 10% de ceux du polymère d'éthylène pratiquement linéaire, et les vitesses de cisaillement critiques respectives du polymère d'éthylène pratiquement linéaire et du polymère d'éthylène linéaire étant mesurées à la même température de la masse fondue à l'aide d'un rhéomètre à extrusion par un gaz, I_2 et I_{10} étant mesurés conformément à la norme ASTM D-1238, conditions 190°C/2,16 kg et conditions 190°C/10 kg, respectivement, et
- 25 (iv) un pic de fusion unique en analyse calorimétrique différentielle, situé entre -30°C et 150°C, et

30 (B) 40 à 85% en poids, par rapport au poids total du mélange, d'au moins un second polymère d'éthylène qui est un polymère d'éthylène ramifié de manière homogène, un polymère d'éthylène linéaire ramifié de manière hétérogène, ou un polymère d'éthylène haute densité, ayant une masse volumique comprise entre 0,890 et 0,942 g/cm³,

35 le mélange de polymères étant **caractérisé en ce qu'il présente** une masse volumique de 0,890 à 0,930 g/cm³, une différence entre les masses volumiques du premier polymère d'éthylène et du second polymère d'éthylène d'au moins 0,015 g/cm³ et un point de ramollissement Vicat d'au moins 75°C (mesuré selon la norme ASTM D-1525 sur des films de 0,051 mm), et

40 (a) une couche de produit formant joint, coextrudée, d'épaisseur 0,038 mm, fabriquée à partir du mélange de polymères, présentant une température d'amorçage de soudure à chaud inférieure ou égale à 100°C, cette température étant mesurée conformément à la description, et une force ultime d'adhérence à chaud d'au moins 2,56 N/cm, cette force étant mesurée conformément à la description, et

(b) le point de ramollissement Vicat du mélange de polymères étant supérieur de plus de 6°C à la température d'amorçage de soudure à chaud de la couche coextrudée de produit formant joint.

45 2. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, dont le polymère d'éthylène pratiquement linéaire a au moins 0,1 ramification à longue chaîne pour 1000 atomes de carbone.

50 3. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, dont le polymère d'éthylène pratiquement linéaire a au moins 0,3 ramification à longue chaîne pour 1000 atomes de carbone.

4. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, dont le second polymère d'éthylène, c'est-à-dire le constituant (B), est un polymère d'éthylène linéaire, ramifié de manière hétérogène, ou un polymère d'éthylène pratiquement linéaire, ayant 0,01 à 3 ramifications à longue chaîne pour 1000 atomes de carbone.

55 5. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, pour lequel au moins l'un du premier polymère d'éthylène, constituant (A), et du second polymère d'éthylène, constituant (B), est un interpolymère d'éthylène et d'au moins une alpha-oléfine choisie parmi le propylène, le 1-butène, le 1-isobutylène, le 1-hexène, le 4-méthyl-1-pentène, le

1-pentène, le 1-heptène et le 1-octène.

6. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, pour lequel au moins l'un du premier polymère d'éthylène, constituant (A), et du second polymère d'éthylène, constituant (B), est un copolymère d'éthylène et de 1-octène.
- 5 7. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, que l'on prépare en mélangeant le premier polymère d'éthylène et le second polymère d'éthylène par au moins l'un des procédés choisis parmi l'extrusion avec mélange à l'état fondu, le mélange à sec, le fonctionnement en série d'au moins deux réacteurs de polymérisation, et le fonctionnement en parallèle d'au moins deux réacteurs de polymérisation.
- 10 8. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, pour lequel au moins l'un du premier polymère d'éthylène représentant le constituant (A), et du second polymère d'éthylène représentant le constituant (B), est **caractérisé par** un indice de fluidité à l'état fondu de 0,1 à 75 g/10 minutes, cet indice étant mesuré selon la norme ASTM D-1238, conditions 190°C/2,16 kg.
- 15 9. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, qui présente du fait de sa composition une proportion de matière extractible à l'hexane inférieure à 15% en poids par rapport au poids total du mélange.
- 20 10. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, qui présente du fait de sa composition une proportion de matière extractible à l'hexane inférieure à 10% en poids par rapport au poids total du mélange.
11. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, qui présente du fait de sa composition une proportion de matière extractible à l'hexane inférieure à 6% en poids par rapport au poids total du mélange.
- 25 12. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, qui présente un point de ramollissement Vicat supérieur d'au moins 8°C à la température d'amorçage de soudure à chaud de la couche de produit formant joint sous forme de film.
- 30 13. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, qui présente un point de ramollissement Vicat supérieur d'au moins 10°C à la température d'amorçage de soudure à chaud de la couche de produit formant joint sous forme de film.
14. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, pour lequel la température d'amorçage de soudure à chaud de la couche de produit formant joint sous forme de film est inférieure à 90°C.
- 35 15. Mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, pour lequel la température d'amorçage de soudure à chaud de la couche de produit formant joint sous forme de film est inférieure à 85°C.
- 40 16. Utilisation du mélange de polymères selon la revendication 1, pour la fabrication d'un film, d'une couche d'un film, d'un revêtement ou d'un article moulé.
17. Utilisation selon la revendication 16, dans laquelle le film est une couche de produit formant joint ou une couche rétractile dans une structure d'emballage.
- 45 18. Utilisation selon la revendication 17, dans laquelle la structure d'emballage est une structure à film multicouche.
19. Utilisation selon la revendication 16, pour la production d'une couche d'une structure de film multicouche.
- 50 20. Utilisation selon la revendication 19, dans laquelle la structure de film multicouche est au moins en partie fabriquée par la technique de coextrusion.
21. Utilisation selon la revendication 19, dans laquelle la structure de film multicouche est un emballage pour cuisson, un emballage pour remplissage à chaud, une poche pour matière fluide, un film rétractile ou un film rétractile formant une barrière.
- 55 22. Utilisation selon la revendication 16, dans laquelle l'article moulé est sous la forme d'un récipient pour la conservation.

EP 0 787 167 B1

23. Utilisation selon la revendication 22, dans laquelle l'article moulé est sous la forme d'un couvercle de récipient pour la conservation.

5 **24.** Utilisation selon la revendication 22, dans laquelle l'article moulé est fabriqué par au moins l'une des techniques suivantes : moulage par injection, moulage par soufflage, moulage par compression, moulage rotatif et moulage par soufflage et injection.

25. Utilisation selon la revendication 22, dans laquelle l'article moulé est fabriqué au moins en partie par moulage par injection.

10

15

20

25

30

35

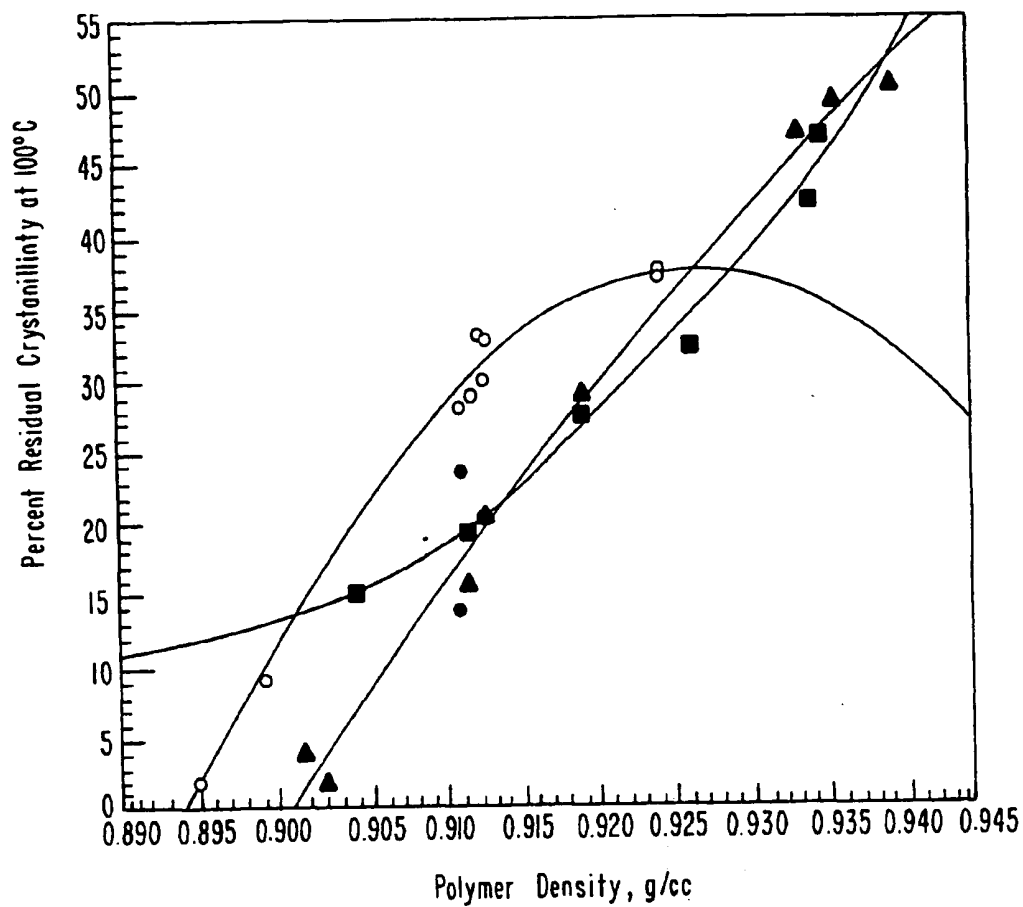
40

45

50

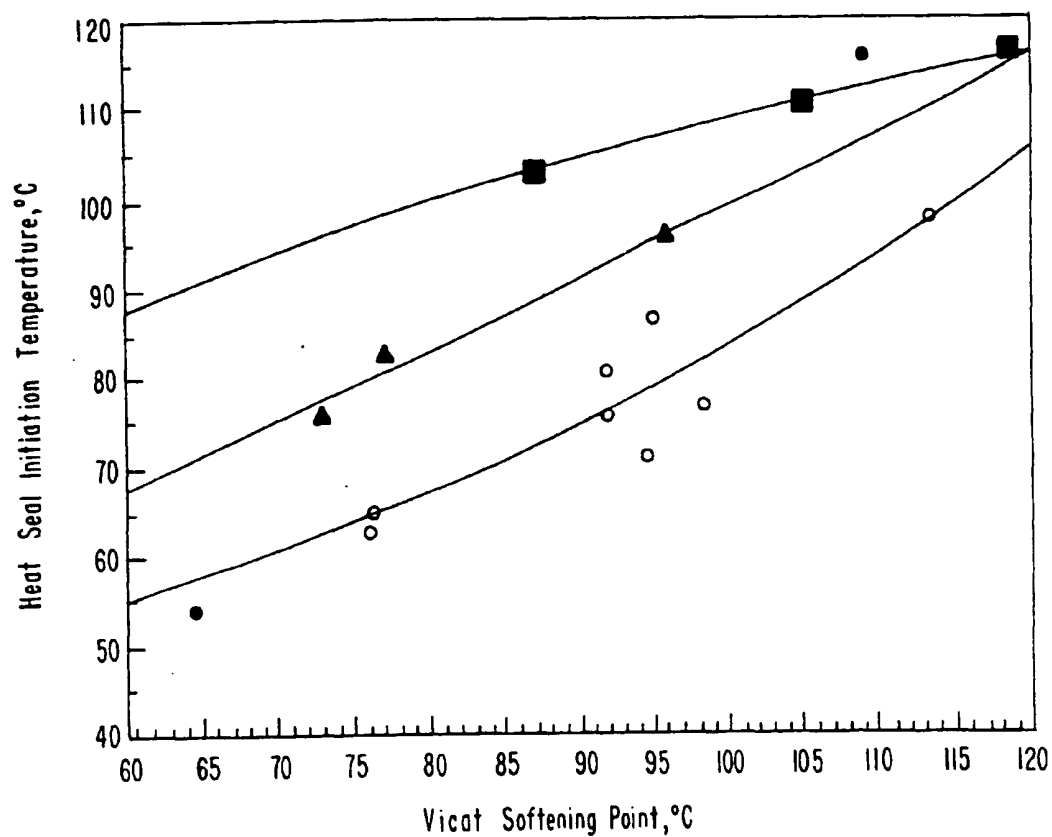
55

FIG. 1



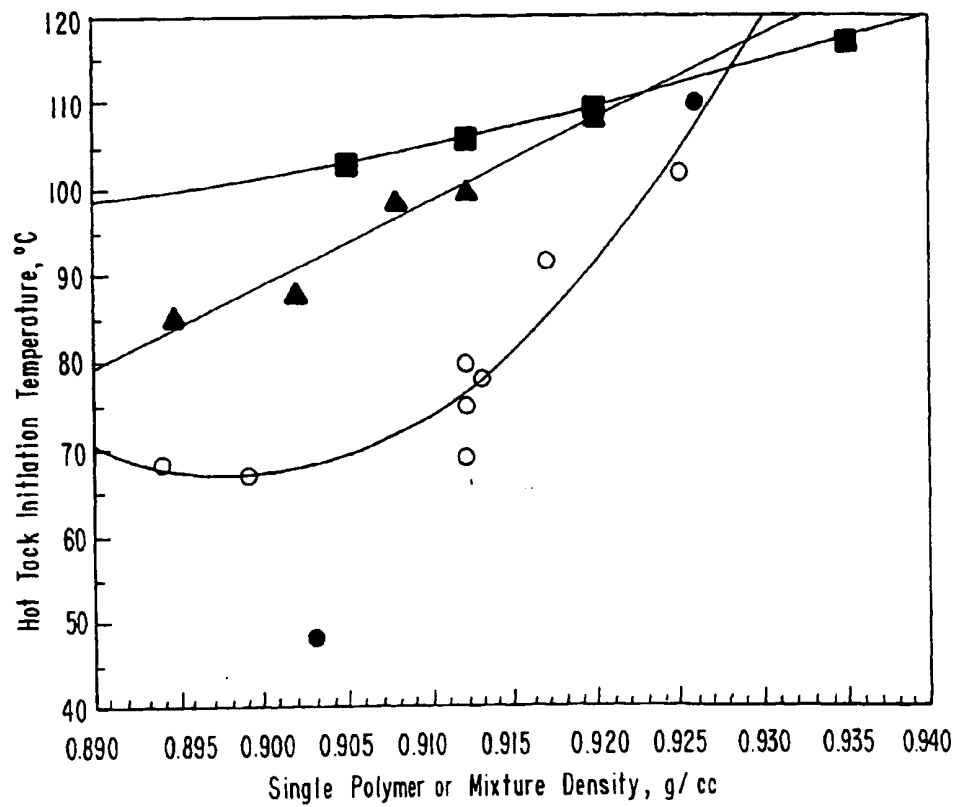
- Linear Ethylene Polymers
- ▲ Substantially Linear Ethylene Polymers
- Inventive Mixtures Examples 5,6,7,9,23,25,26,27,28
- Comparative Mixtures Examples C11,C29,C30

FIG. 2



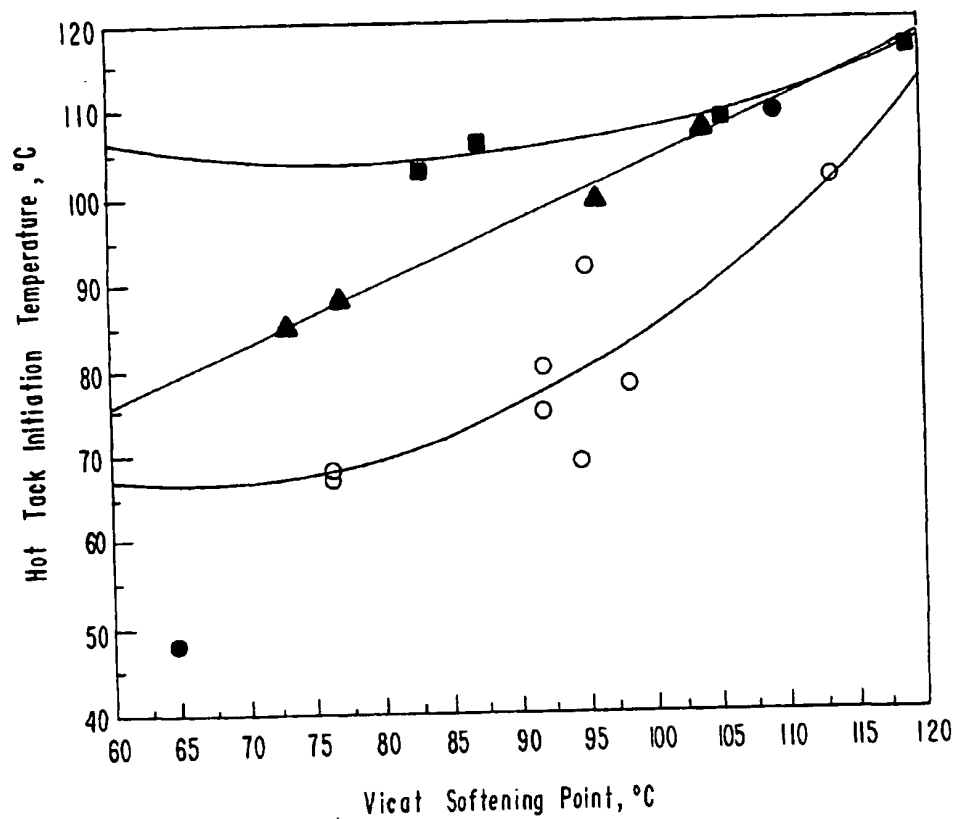
- Heterogeneous Linear Polymers
- △ Substantially Linear Polymers
- Inventive Mixtures Examples 1-8
- Comparative Mixtures C9, C10

FIG. 3



- Heterogeneous Linear Polymers
- ▲ Substantially Linear Polymers
- Inventive Mixtures Examples 1-8
- Comparative Mixtures C9, C10

FIG.4



- Heterogeneous Linear Polymers
- ▲ Substantially Linear Polymers
- Inventive Mixtures Examples 1-8
- Comparative Mixtures C9, C10

FIG.5



FIG.6

